

# THE WIDOWHOOD OF QUEEN VICTORIA



CLARE JERROLD







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*Queen Victoria.*

# THE WIDOWHOOD OF QUEEN VICTORIA

BY

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"THE EARLY COURT OF QUEEN VICTORIA," "THE MARRIED LIFE OF  
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HAVING dealt with "The Early Court of Queen Victoria," and "The Married Life of Queen Victoria," it seemed appropriate to round off this critical biography of the late Queen by describing the second half of her life, that which was spent in widowhood. This volume gives a presentation, not of events of history or politics, but of Queen Victoria's influence on those events, of her sorrows and joys, her mistakes and successes. She, "a poor, helpless woman," to use her own words, had suddenly to furnish herself with a support by the help of which she could gather again into her own hands the affairs of State; and the support she chose, though natural to one of her temperament, brought about some curious results.

Her great affection for all things Teutonic, her unwavering determination to work "for a strong Prussia and a united Germany," may not have been without their effect upon the German mind when the war lords were laying their plans for the conquest of Europe.

CLARE JERROLD.



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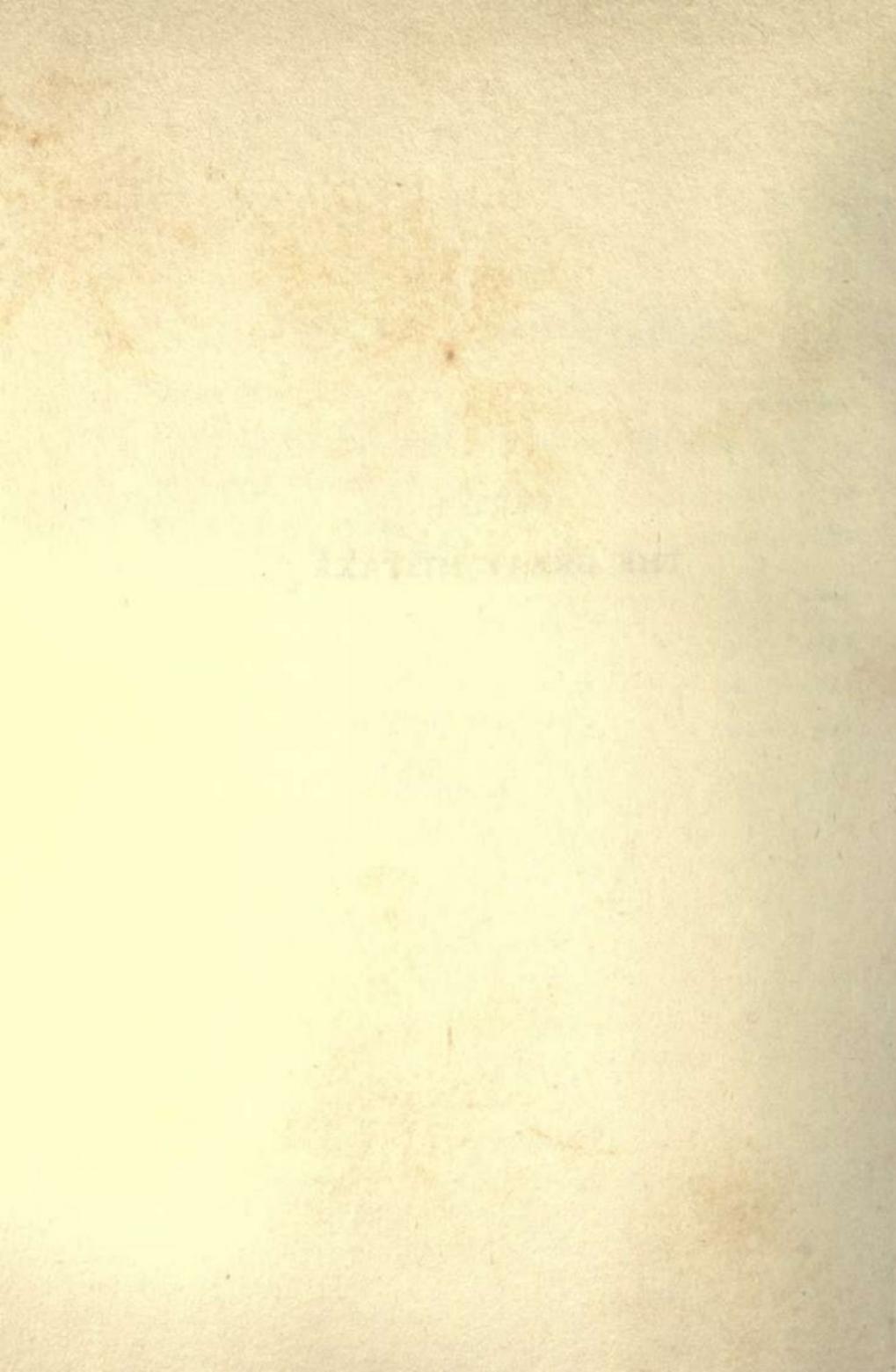
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PART I  
THE GREAT MISTAKE



## CHAPTER I

### THE QUEEN ALONE

IN the ancient palace of our kings a woman's heart lay bleeding; and to the supreme place in birth, in station, in splendour and in power was now added another and sadder title of pre-eminence in grief."—*W. E. Gladstone at Manchester, March 1862.*

"With Prince Albert we have buried our Sovereign. This German Prince has governed England for twenty-one years with a wisdom and energy such as none of our kings have ever shown. He was the permanent private secretary of the Queen. If he had outlived some of our 'old stagers' he would have given us, while retaining all constitutional guarantees, the blessings of absolute government."—*Benjamin Disraeli, in conversation with Count Vitzthum von Eckstaedt.*

WITH the death of the Prince Consort ended the comfortable state of actual, though not apparent, irresponsibility in which Queen Victoria had lived since the early years of her marriage. As a girl-queen she had found herself placed suddenly in a position of great power; from the schoolroom she went to the throne; from living in a state of absolute subordination she saw the gate of the fairyland of seeming freedom open wide, and, seizing her opportunity, she went through quickly and shut the gate behind her. When her mother tried to follow the way was barred and the barrier was labelled, "No interference."

From the moment that William IV changed this life

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for perhaps a better one Victoria openly showed the strength of her development; she had at last the opportunity of turning a deaf ear to maternal advice, she could shake herself free from what was publicly known as the Kensington Camarilla, could enjoy solitude and talk with whom she would. These possibilities crowded upon her mind and gave her the first taste of royal luxury. "Allow me, my dear mamma, to be alone for two hours," was the first advantage she took of the new position, and the last request made as a child to her mother.

Her fresh duties she grasped at eagerly. She read dispatches while her maid was plaiting her hair, and took a curious and intelligent interest in all matters of State. Yet though her outlook, her surroundings, her habits all were changed, there was one thing which remained the same: she was still at lessons under a tutor. This tutor was the courtly, kindly gentleman, Lord Melbourne, who saw her every day and explained things with the most direct simplicity. To his influence she unconsciously and quite willingly fell again into bondage.

It was a different bondage; one which was not bounded by the four walls of a room, by the covers of a lesson book, or by maternal solicitude for convention. Her interests were as wide as her kingdom, and for the time she did not wish to go beyond. Her mind was so full of the new lessons that independent thought was impossible, and she deferred in all things to her preceptor. She was being educated in the ways of the world as well as in those of the State, and her

diary of the period shows far more evidence of pleasant gossip about people and events than about public business. In the latter she did as she was told, for the telling was judicious in the extreme.

In personal matters, however, the young Queen could sustain an opinion of her own unswervingly, as was evinced when the two old gentlemen, Mel bourne and Wellington, thought it indelicate for a young girl to hold a military review in Hyde Park on horseback, and combined to force her to the ignominious position of the corner of a carriage.

"No, my lord; no horse, no review," was her reply; and there was no review. The next year there were both horse and review.

There were, on her part, other determined refusals to be guided by advice on personal matters which have already been described in an earlier volume; two of them shattered her popularity with the aristocracy. They were definite indications of the line she would take in personal and social incidents to the end of her long life; just as her relations with Mel bourne were symbolical of her attitude to the problem of government, which, in a curious way, remained with her to the end.

She was wilful enough when lovers came upon the scene; yet when the lover became the husband she once more hung up the notice: "No interference!" and the notice was exhibited for many months, to the painful bewilderment of Prince Albert, who complained that his little wife listened to all that Mel bourne said, but remained "inattentive to the plans

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and measures proposed" and "thought it unnecessary entirely to comprehend them";<sup>1</sup> in fact, that she allowed herself to be dominated by her adviser. The Prince set to work to alter this, and in course of time was able to announce himself as the Queen's Permanent Minister.

From that day things went well between the two rulers. The Prince allowed nothing to escape his careful thought, and Victoria was as ready to say "Aye!" to him as she had been to say it to Melbourne. Thus it was through the remainder of her married life, though the Prince carried his peculiarly German ideas of royal responsibility to a pitch most disconcerting to the Queen's Ministers, and succeeded in making himself unpopular with all classes. But in all difficulties he himself referred to his own tutor, Stockmar, and thus the ultimate royal word upon the government of England was in all great, and often in little, things uttered by a German baron, whose knowledge of English statecraft was purely academic. So the reactionary Teutonic theory of the divine right of kings and the subservience of ministers was planted upon the English Constitution, and for half a century enjoyed a precarious existence.

By 1861 the Queen was in danger of being spoilt, for she had become autocratic, and even with her hard-working husband insisted upon a recognition of her supreme position. She ruled her household under his guidance with a remarkable knowledge of detail, she ruled her children lovingly and yet with severity,

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Queen Victoria.*

and she took an intelligent interest in foreign affairs, though all royal action concerning them was according to the Prince's decision. Indeed, her life was full without the intrusion of the actual fact of governing; this she was content to leave to her husband, but she exacted in return the recognition that she was the real Sovereign.

In the midst of this somewhat careless and self-centred existence fell the blow which cut like a guillotine across her life.

During the Prince Consort's illness up to December 12, the Queen could write to King Leopold a good report: "I do not sit up with him at night, as it could be of no use; and there is nothing to cause alarm." Two days later Prince Albert collapsed. Thus in a few hours, from comparative security and belief in her husband's recuperative powers, Victoria found herself faced with the most appalling loss which could have befallen her. She had actually lost her better half, for it was the half which was the reality of the Throne and which helped her to keep the appearance of it. Truly enough could she say in a letter to Lord Canning, who had just lost his wife—

"To lose one's partner in life is, as Lord Canning knows, like losing half of one's *body* and *soul*, torn forcibly away . . . but to the Queen—to a poor helpless woman—it is not that only—it is the stay, support and comfort which is lost. To the Queen it is like death in life! Great and small, nothing was done without his loving advice and help—and she

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feels *alone* in the wide world. . . . Her misery, her utter despair—she cannot describe."

Into this chaos of dazed and dreadful feelings penetrated another—that of fear; a fear which was engendered by the promised arrival of her Uncle Leopold, he who from the time that she was a baby had fathered and advised her. She feared that now, being alone, she would see him once again assume the tone of paternal dictator; and in the midst of her helplessness, her sensation of being lost and powerless, she felt that any suspicion of authority over her would be unendurable torture.

If *he* were dead she had to go on living, bring up her children, rule her kingdom, take into her own hands that fearful mass of work for the State with which Albert had overwhelmed himself. It was an impossible task, and yet it was *her* task. She would do it with her dead husband's help. So ten days after the tragedy once more the barrier, "No interference," was displayed in a letter to King Leopold, from which I extract the following—

"I am also anxious to repeat *one* thing, and that *one* is *my firm* resolve, my *irrevocable decision*, viz. that *his* wishes—*his* plans—about everything, *his* views about *everything* are to be *my law!* And *no human power* will make me swerve from *what he* decided and wished—and I look to *you* to *support* and *help* me in this. I apply this particularly as regards our children—Bertie, etc.—for whose future he had traced everything *so* carefully. I am *also determined* that *no one* person, may *he* be ever so

good, ever so devoted among my servants—is to lead or guide or dictate *to me*. I know *how he* would disapprove it. And I live *on* with him, for him; in fact, I am only *outwardly* separated from him, and *only* for a *time*. . . . Though miserably weak and utterly shattered, my spirit rises when I think *any* wish or plan of his is to be touched or changed, or I am to be *made to do* anything."

King Leopold probably answered this letter in person, as he was at Osborne directly after, but it is curious to note that even before the letter was written he had made his authority felt by the widowed Queen in insisting upon her leaving Windsor before the funeral. Indeed, the protest may have been the direct result of his dictation.

There probably was something more than a pandering to conventional custom in the pressure he put upon the Queen to go away from the castle, for though the published reason for the Prince Consort's death was gastric fever and congestion of the lungs, the medical papers assured the public that it was typhoid.<sup>1</sup> Two years earlier there had been an alarming outbreak of typhoid at Windsor, both in the castle and the town, and for many years after 1861 Windsor was known as one of the most insanitary places in England. The castle itself had been partially cleared of the fifty-one unventilated cesspools constructed

<sup>1</sup> *The Lancet* and *Medical Times* also said that one bulletin issued on Dec. 11, saying that the fever was "unattended by any unfavourable symptoms," was not issued as written, but that the first word, "hitherto," had been struck out "by an illustrious person with her own hand."

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beneath it, and of which Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, when making his alterations, remarked dubiously, "I hope it is all right, but there will be a terrible stink one day." But there still remained a condition of things which was bad enough to poison the whole royal household, and so it was proved when examination of the drainage began in January 1862.

At Osborne Queen Victoria remained with her younger children while the body of the Prince was placed temporarily in a vaulted passage beneath St. George's Chapel; and to Osborne the mourners who came from Germany went to see her after the funeral, among them being the finicking, fretful Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg, who loved not the sea and suffered agony in his "terrible passage to Dover." Victoria wished to see him on his way to Windsor, so, to his horror, he was not allowed to recover gently on land, but was at once carried by express to Portsmouth, and "in spite of the raging storm" was obliged to embark on the Queen's yacht, the *Fire-Queen*, and steam to Osborne.

It was not a pleasant experience for a middle-aged gentleman, and it was made worse by the fact that to ensure privacy the Queen had commanded that the yacht should not enter Cowes, but anchor in the open road below Osborne House, whence the Duke proceeded in a small rowing-boat through wild waves to the landing-place. It was near the hour of midnight when, frozen with cold, drenched to the skin, and every emotion chilled, the unfortunate man entered Victoria's home. The servant who opened the door

to him quickly disappeared, and then alone he went to the Queen, who awaited him on the staircase—

“Thus I found the unhappy woman, bowed down with sorrow and utterly prostrate in the stillness of the night, which was interrupted by nothing but the loud grief which deprived us both of words.”<sup>1</sup>

Of the funeral Ernst wrote: “Of the Queen’s family I had none at my side but the Prince of Wales. The more comforting was the sympathy of the Orleans family, hardly a member of which had remained absent.”

He ignores the German princes who were present, also the fact that Prince Arthur was there; and as Victoria’s son Alfred was away at sea and little Leopold was at Cannes and the Duke of Cambridge ill, there were no others to go.

Though the Queen was not present she had carefully studied the proceedings and had ordered one alteration. The proclamation of the Garter-King-at-Arms at the graveside should have ended with a reference to her, “whom God bless and preserve with long life, health and happiness.” The last word was changed to honour.

Duke Ernst went back to Osborne to spend this “the saddest of Christmases with the Queen, and as though loss and loneliness were not enough, menace and a hint of war threatened her Majesty from the Solent.” It was the time of the American civil war, and England, with its noisy sympathy for the South, was allowing buccaneering vessels to coal, refit and

<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of Ernst, Second Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha.*

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man in English ports, pretending not to know that they were rovers against the Northern States. One such, the *Nashville*, was then in Southampton Water, and so an American man-of-war, the *Tuscarora*, flying no flag, slipped into the Solent and anchored off Osborne. Ernst and Victoria jumped to the conclusion that the intention was to threaten the latter personally. The guards at Osborne were reinforced, two English frigates cruised between the island and the American ship, and gradually everything assumed a warlike aspect. "At any moment," says the Duke, "some unforeseen incident, such as would have been nothing new in the English navy, might have been followed by the most dreadful consequences." However, nothing did happen; the *Tuscarora* remained for some days, ran into Southampton Water on January 8 and spent some time silently daring the *Nashville* to move, and what occurred later I do not know.

Queen Victoria remained at Osborne for weeks, taking "great pleasure in the universal feeling of sympathy for her and sorrow for him shown by all classes," and in reading and re-reading the innumerable consolatory letters she had received, and all of which she carefully preserved. It is curious, in the light of after events, to note that she was most deeply impressed by the letter written by Gladstone and that she specially answered it, begging him to write again. Gladstone's speech at Manchester on the Prince Consort's death, showing how well he could sympathize with loss, is now historic. Victoria's whole



PRINCE CONSORT AND QUEEN VICTORIA IN 1860



conversation during those weeks at Osborne was of the Prince, "and she found much comfort in it," said Lady Ely, who left early in February, being ill and much depressed, a state to which most of the Queen's attendants had been reduced by the constant demand made upon their active show of sympathy.

In politics matters were greatly complicated by the serious illness of Palmerston, who had a severe attack of gout, it being feared that he would not recover; indeed, his death was actually reported at one time. Had he died the Queen would have regarded it as a very great calamity for her, so near had she and her old enemy approached each other in these days. But if Pam were incapable of conducting public affairs, Victoria herself found it intolerable to induct herself once again into the resumption of the actual practice of her regal duties; indeed, her strong determination to live according to the Prince's ideals hung for a little in the balance. She wanted to do it, but the effort was too dreadful; she surely could have some respite; no one would expect her at once to put her shoulders under the yoke. Thus it was that, when obliged to communicate with her Ministers, she left it to Sir Charles Phipps, the keeper of the privy purse, to act as her mouthpiece. The Ministers were unwilling to allow the formation of a new precedent of so important a nature, and signed a memorial refusing to transact business with her in this unofficial way. The Earl of Malmesbury judged that their action, "though right, was certainly cruel under present circumstances." But the cruelty may be

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doubted. Her Majesty was for years only too fully inclined to indulge her grief to the exclusion of everything else, and something of sufficient importance to divert her mind must have been, even at that early date, a blessing.

If the Queen had chosen as her deputy the right person, the heir to the throne, the incident might have been regarded differently. But this she would not do. She was determined, for one thing, that the young prince should go through with the programme already marked out for him by his father, in spite of any arguments which might be urged against it by King Leopold or any one else; and she had also made up her mind that Albert Edward was the last person upon whom she would call for help. So she bowed to the demands of her Ministers and held a Privy Council at Osborne on January 6, 1862. "This most painful exertion," she described it; and such it must have been, for it was twenty years since she had met her Privy Councillors without the support of the Prince Consort.

## CHAPTER II

### A PRINCE IN BONDAGE

"*Busch.* They live above the cloud of courtiers and other menials, separated by them from the ideas and feelings of other mortals, whose wishes and opinions only reach them in a mutilated or adapted form, and sometimes not at all.

"*Bismarck.* The comparison is a good one, gods and yet very human. They ought to be better educated, so that they should know how things look here below, how the real are not appearances but truth."—*Moritz Busch: Bismarck, Some Secret Pages of his History.*

"In Edinburgh next, thy poor noodle, perplexed,  
The gauntlet must run of each science and study,  
Till the mixed streams of knowledge, turned on by the  
college,  
Through the fields of thy boy-brains run shallow and muddy.  
Dipped in grey Oxford mixture (lest that prove a fixture),  
The poor lad's to be plunged in less orthodox Cam,  
When dynamics and statics, and pure mathematics,  
Will be piled on his brain's awful cargo of cram.  
Where next the boy may go, to swell the farrago,  
We haven't yet heard, but the palace they're plotting in;  
To Berlin, Jena, Bonn, he'll no doubt be passed on,  
And drop in for a finishing touch, p'raps at Gottingen."

*Punch, September 24, 1859.*

OF late years the Prince of Wales had presented great difficulties to his parents, who did not know how to reconcile the position and claims of the heir to the throne with the anomalous position of his father. Victoria had been much agitated by this problem in 1857 when, as a safeguard, she decided to confer, by

Royal Letters Patent, as Parliament would not do it for her, the title of Prince Consort upon her husband, writing about it as follows—

“The children may deny the position which their mother has given to their father as a usurpation over them, having the law on their side; or, if they waive their rights in his favour, he will hold a position granted by the forbearance of his children. In both cases this is a position most derogatory to the Queen as well as to her husband, and dangerous to the peace and well-being of her family. If the children resist, the Queen will have her husband pushed away from her side by her children, and they will take precedence over the man whom she is bound to obey; if they are dutiful she will owe her peace of mind to their continued generosity.”

But when the title was conferred the parental uneasiness did not quite disappear, and this led to the putting off as long as possible any step which would tend to recognize in the Prince of Wales a person of responsibility. They also had come to the conclusion that he was a disappointment, that he was far from reaching anywhere near the ideal which they had raised for him.

In their youth they had unquestioningly accepted Baron Stockmar’s dictum that from the very first—nay, from before his birth, their son must be trained for his high and kingly state; they thought unceasingly about him and his mental needs, consulted over every detail, mapped out every branch of knowledge which he was to acquire. His mind was to them the blank

page upon which they were to imprint their own ideals. They never realized that the boy was born with a temperament and predilections of his own, and they felt injured and surprised when their impressions came out blurred and spoilt. They gave him history, science and languages to study, and there they stopped, and, in stopping, failed. Romance was rigidly barred; even the good and staid Sir Walter was accounted too frivolous for a young prince. In his childhood there had been no fairy tales, and in his youth poetry was banished, while none of the graces of literature were allowed to lighten and brighten the dry ways of history and science. His mind was kept in a prison, and his body was scarcely more free, for his actions and habits were strictly regulated through every minute of the day. Albert Edward, like the little Princess Victoria of an earlier generation, was never permitted to be alone, and very seldom allowed to enjoy the society of boys of his own age. Well might Prince Metternich say of him at sixteen—

“He is pleasant to every one, but he has an embarrassed and a very sad air.”

Any infringement of his parents’ rules was met with definite punishment, for reason had no great place in this iron system. The Prince Consort never spared the child by neglecting the rod, and it is on record that once when, as a little boy, the Prince behaved badly in the drawing-room, the Queen took him up and administered with her own hand the correction so dear to the hearts of the parents of that period.

As a young man Albert Edward had to sandwich

visits abroad with educational experiments at Edinburgh, Oxford and Cambridge, each of which places furnished a story of him, two of which endeared him more to the less well- or ill-regulated public than to his father; the other pleased all. At Edinburgh he was studying under Lyon Playfair, and one day, after making the Prince wash his hands to get rid of any grease, the lecturer said—

“Now, sir, if you have any faith in science you will plunge your right hand into this cauldron of boiling lead and ladle it out into the cold water which is standing by.”

“Are you serious?” asked the Prince, and on being assured that he was, he said, “If you tell me to do it I will.”

“I do tell you,” answered Playfair, and the Prince ladled out the burning fluid without scald or hurt.

Wherever the youth went he was surrounded by men of a mature age. Sir Edward Dicey<sup>1</sup> tells how he saw him in Rome often, but “no one ever saw the Prince out of doors alone; he was always accompanied by one or both his tutors, General Grey or Mr. Frederick Gibbs, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. Admirably qualified to explain monuments they may have been, but they were certainly not the companions that a young prince would have chosen.”

It was so until he was twenty-one, and it was the duty of the elderly gentleman at the moment responsible to send daily reports to the parents, giving a

<sup>1</sup> *King Edward VII: Biographical and Personal Sketches.*  
By Sir Edward Dicey.

detailed narrative of his pupil's life during the preceding day, telling where he had been, whom he had spoken to or seen.

Thus it was not to be wondered at that now and then the youth rebelled and tried to escape into a short freedom. A story goes that when at Oxford he rose quietly very early one morning and left the city of learning while his estimable tutors were still sleeping the sleep of the just. However, they soon found it out, and going to the station discovered that he had taken a ticket to London, whereupon they wired to his father, with the result that the truant was met at the terminus by two footmen in charge of a royal carriage. They asked him where he wished to be driven, and he replied, with quiet humour—

“To Exeter Hall.”

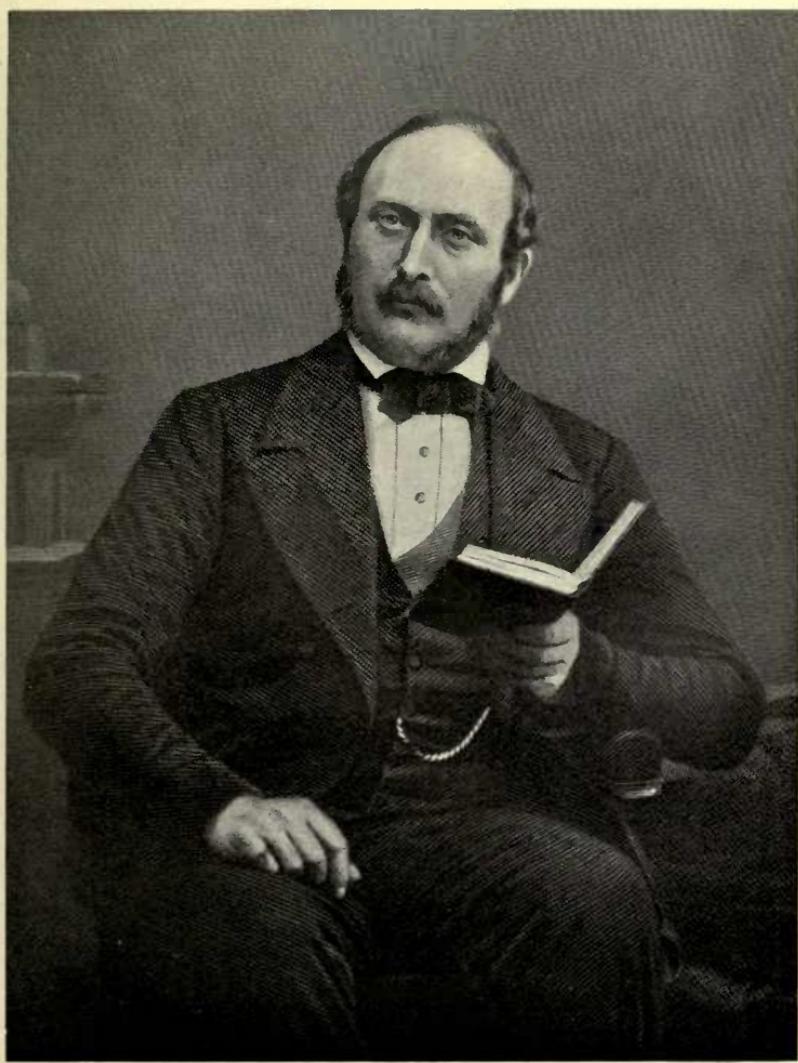
The Cambridge story is much the same, except that this time the footmen brought a letter from the Queen desiring his attendance at lunch at Buckingham Palace.

By 1861 Albert Edward was practically banished from home excepting for a very short time there in between college and travel. Thus, had his father lived, he would have spent at Windsor the days between the end of the term and the 28th of December, when a journey to the East would have begun. This sort of thing had been going on for some years, and people who watched events did not scruple to say that Albert-Victoria had no desire for the presence of their eldest son at the centre of affairs; that the Prince Consort was simply putting off the evil day as long

as possible by labelling these perfunctory collegiate careers and these travels abroad as education.

There were whispers at Court about serious misdeeds on the young prince's part, and after Albert's death it was said that the Queen was bitterly angry with her son, as she blamed him for his father's fatal illness, in that the Prince Consort had caught a chill when he went to Cambridge in November to extricate him from the effects of some escapade. Colour was given to this by the fact that she expressed no desire for his presence during the weeks that the Prince was ill; even on the Friday when Dr. Jenner told her that her husband's state was most critical she did not send for him. He was left in Cambridge in disgrace, shut out from the family anxiety because, having been brought up on a starvation system, he had fallen into excess. Princess Alice sent him a telegram late on the Friday, and by starting at once he reached Windsor at three on Saturday morning, stricken with grief, and ready to do anything. But the suppression under which he had been brought up had destroyed his initiative, and it was Princess Alice who took the lead. Neither then nor later did he ever stand in the position of an adviser or helper to his mother.

Various explanations were given for this, the best accredited being the resentment mentioned above, which was so keen that Victoria preferred not to have her son near her. A totally different one was that she gave him the chance of retrieving himself, by asking him to become her private secretary, taking up as far as possible the work of his father. The Prince, know-



THE PRINCE CONSORT IN 1861



ing what that work had been, aware of his own inexperience and his mother's arbitrariness, was afraid of the task and begged her not to require so much of him at first. It was added that the Queen never forgave him his hesitation, and that when later he himself asked for the post she absolutely refused to let him associate himself in any way with State affairs.

The latter story is hardly credible. Victoria was a rigid little person, and the impressions on her mind at the date of Albert's death seemed to remain there for about three decades. At that moment both she and her husband were disappointed that their son had not turned out as they expected, as they felt that their careful training ought to have turned him out; they were certain that the fault did not lie in their system, but in some abnormal strain of wickedness in the boy himself, therefore they could neither trust nor rely upon him; and therefore, also, Victoria was determined to carry out the final plans for his regeneration which had been made by her consort.

Reports of dissensions and differences between mother and son were spread abroad, varied by others that the Queen had refused to see or speak with Albert Edward at all, and the newspapers began to treat of the subject. Thus, ten days—pitifully soon—after the beginning of her Majesty's widowhood a leader appeared in *The Times* offering her some advice. Truly she was not to be allowed time for grief. There were whispers going about—probably quite unjustifiably—of influence inimical to the young prince being exercised by the old advisers, King Leopold and

Stockmar, which perhaps explains the haste of *The Times*.

The article began by reminding the Queen that there had always been discord between the Brunswickian sovereigns and their heirs; that the duty of a parent was not terminated by change, and that implicit obedience should result in mutual confidence and affection.

"We sincerely trust that her Majesty, so superior in most respects to most sovereigns of her race, will also prove her superiority to them by regarding any influence which may interpose between her and the confidence of her son as a sinister and ill-omened intrusion, boding nothing but evil to her and to him. We are sure she will feel—what any mother in a private station would feel—that of all the counsels that are offered him there are none which it is so desirable that he should follow as her own. A young and active mind naturally seeks for employment, and it is in the power of the Queen to provide for the Prince the most profitable and dignified employment in which he can be engaged by associating him with her as much as possible in the cares and duties of government."

A day or two later an attack was made on the Prince himself which had something of the revivalist twang about it. He was admonished that from living a most unusually restrained life, he was now the head of the family; that two paths lay before him, those of duty and pleasure; and that if he wished for public affection and esteem he must "choose now—the decision

is to be made this very hour"—between frivolity, trouble and misery, and a reign of usefulness which would make his name blessed for ever!

Other papers followed suit, either preaching to Albert Edward or defending him, and *Reynolds's Newspaper* had the temerity to end with this flourish—

"So he will continue a new and better mode of reigning in England, one needed by the advance in power of the heir and the reserve imposed by that advance on the personal action of the Sovereign."

We can imagine the stupendous anger of Queen Victoria at the hint that she, a ruler by right divine, was to delegate any scrap of her power to any one, son or otherwise. Such words entirely sealed the Prince's fate, and four days later it was publicly announced that—

"The Prince of Wales will carry out the completion of his education and make a tour in the Eastern lands."

The decision came as a blow to many people, for workers in various fields had been anticipating with pleasure the help of a young and gracious English prince between whom and them that strange Germanic superiority and stiffness would not lie as a barrier. To quote from the *Annual Register*, he was being sent away "at a time when his presence could ill be spared at the palace, and when the prospects of the Great Exhibition (of 1862) seemed almost to depend on his taking the place of the Prince Consort."

So Prince Albert Edward went again on his travels with his little army of elderly restrainers, and saw

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many things, the most notable being the holy burial place of the Patriarchs, the Cave of Macpelah, where were buried Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. No European or Christian was allowed within the tomb, but the Prince Consort, with true Germanic disregard of other nations' susceptibilities, had ordered that this should be done, and so by dint of serious threats the English party gained admittance, guarded by a strong military escort, an army being sent by the cowed authorities so that soldiers should be stationed in every house and on every vacant spot in case some infuriated Mussulman attempted in his wrath to avenge the intrusion of an infidel prince into his Holy of Holies. By such incidents has Britain earned her reputation for arrogance.

## CHAPTER III

### THE QUEEN'S CHILDREN

"While she was visiting the Queen after the engagement she always came to breakfast in a jacket. 'My dear,' said the Queen one day, 'you seem very fond of jackets! How is it that you always wear a jacket?' 'Well,' said little Alexandra, 'I like them; and then, you see, a jacket is *so economical!* You can wear different skirts with it, and I have very few gowns, having to make them all myself! My sisters and I have no lady's maid, and have been brought up to make all our own clothes. I made my own bonnet.' Bless her!"—*Jane Welsh Carlyle.*

"And there were old gauntlets and pieces of hair;  
And fragments of backcombs, and slippers were there;  
And the gay were all silent; their mirth was all hushed;  
While the dewdrops stood out on the brows of the crushed.  
And the dames of Belgravia were loud in their wail,  
And the matrons of Mayfair all took up the tale;  
And they vowed, as they hurried, unnerved, from the scene,  
That it's no trifling matter to call on the Queen."

*Jon Duan.*

THROUGH the first year or two of her widowhood Victoria's chief interest was given to the settling in life of some of her children. It was a great anxiety to her, though it was absolutely pleasant compared with the troubles which arose later over further efforts in the same direction.

The first to be settled was Princess Alice, then nineteen, who was engaged to Prince Louis, nephew of the then Grand Duke of Hesse Darmstadt; he

possessed a very small income and no house to which to take his bride, but he belonged to the royally favoured nation, and the marriage would have taken place in the winter but for the Prince Consort's death. Parliament granted the Princess £30,000 as dowry and a yearly income of £6000, and the wedding took place at Osborne very quietly on July 1, 1862. From that time the affairs of this loving, gentle daughter absorbed much of the Queen's thoughts, and many and large were the sums of money which went to help the young people to make a home at Kranichstein and to pay the debts incurred in doing so. Later the Queen had a palace built for them in Darmstadt.

At the end of 1862 the Queen had high hopes of seeing Prince Alfred comfortably settled in a kingdom of his own, for the Greeks had tired of Otto, the king imposed upon them by Russia, France and England, and of his rigid Germanic system of government. A student had tried to murder Otto's queen Amalie, also a German, and the nation had hailed the criminal as a national hero. Upon this the army revolted, the King was declared deposed, and the royal pair took refuge on a British man-of-war. Then the Greeks looked round for a successor, and chose young Alfred of England, he being then eighteen years old, probably because they hoped by this means to regain control of the Ionian Isles, which England had taken over.

The Queen hailed the scheme with delight, which caused much disturbance to her Ministers, who fore-saw consequent quarrels with France and Russia, as

the original treaty forbade any relative of either of the three signatory Powers taking the Greek throne; so she was painfully induced to relinquish the plan, and the crown was then offered to King Ferdinand, next to Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg. The latter in his turn was delighted, and Victoria was even better pleased that he should have it than that her own son should, for if Ernst went to Greece Alfred would have Coburg. However, Otto had accepted to the full the German idea of his being a king by divine right, and would not abdicate, so the Duke felt that his reign might be somewhat hazardous : that he might one day find Otto returned, Alfred in possession of his duchy, and he a beggar without a home. His suggestion then was that his nephew should become Regent in Saxe-Coburg until he himself was firmly established in his new kingdom. Leopold thought this reasonable, but Victoria absolutely refused any compromise; Ernst must go, and go for good. A royal quarrel resulted, and the Queen considered herself greatly harassed and ill-used by her brother-in-law, Ernst being dubbed as grasping and ungrateful. Palmerston thought that a provisional arrangement might be made, but he was getting old and was no longer a match for a vigorous and strong-willed woman. From that time to the end of his life he gave way to the Queen in every dispute.

While the matter was still pending the English Government approached Prince Leiningen and Prince Hohenlohe, both young relatives of the Queen, but both saw the risks as too great for the adventure.

Knowing of these negotiations, Ernst decided definitely against, and Victoria with some bitterness found closed a second opening for Alfred. William George, a brother of Princess Alexandra, was brave enough to become King of the Hellenes—a title manufactured for the occasion; and a year later the Ionian Islands were ceded to Greece.

The marriage of the Prince of Wales had been much discussed before the death of the Prince Consort, the choice being eventually between two German girls, Princess Alexandrina of Prussia and Princess Alexandra, daughter of the Duke of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, who had by the treaty of 1852 been made heir to the throne of Denmark. Queen Victoria keenly desired the first alliance, but Prince Albert inclined to the second, and King Leopold strongly upheld him; the popular belief being that he was moved by the entreaties of Albert Edward, who had seen a portrait of Alexandra, and declared that he would marry none but her. In reality both Leopold and Victoria had deeper reasons.

William, king over a Prussia which resisted his weak but despotic rule, was planning to cut through his troubles by flourishing the torch of war in the face of Denmark through the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein. The Queen, allied with Prussia by her daughter's marriage and moved always by her family emotions, wished to make it impossible to side against Prussia, and incidentally against the interest of that daughter, by forming another alliance with that

country. Leopold, on the other hand, recognizing the danger of Prussia as a near neighbour, desired an English-Denmark bond which would warn Prussia from her intended depredations. His arguments, backed by Albert Edward's inclination, weighed down the scale, and the first hint of a decision led to a meeting between the young people at the Prussian manœuvres in September 1861; then the Prince Consort died, and they did not see each other again for a year.

The English papers were constantly referring to the engagement as an accomplished fact, causing much annoyance at Windsor; but in August 1862 occurred one of those little comedies of ceremony of which Victoria was so fond.

First she went to stay at Brussels, leaving after a few days for her daughter Alice's home. A day or so later the Prince of Wales appeared in his uncle's capital, and the next day came Prince Christian, his wife and daughters. The Prince and Princess spent a week in each other's society, and then the Danes departed in one direction, while Albert Edward left in another. The young man went to Kranichstein to report progress to his mother, and was quickly followed by the Danish party. Then the engagement was announced.

On Prussia the news fell, as Duke Ernst said, like a thunder-burst. The Prussian Princess had been slighted for a little person from little Schleswig-Holstein; King William had relied on the friendship of Queen Victoria, and she had failed him; indeed,

the ideal of a “united Germany” could no longer be cherished by her!

In England it was very different; the people lost sight of the bride’s German birth and saw in her only a Dane, whose land was nearly surrounded by the wild sea, and who was, or must be, akin to the English in life and tastes. They accepted her with all their hearts, and were ready to champion her through thick and thin.

Sandringham House was bought from Spencer Cowper, at the extortionate price of £200,000, it having then to be rebuilt; and Marlborough House was redecorated and furnished, the usual discovery being made of paintings under a layer of stucco, in this case pictures of the victories of Marlborough, by Kneller, up the stairway.

Young and gay as she was, when Alexandra came to visit the Queen the sadness of the Court oppressed her, and she viewed with concern the heavy *crêpe* garments worn by her hostess. Taking up a bonnet one day which was overweighted with *crêpe* and encumbered with a long *crêpe* veil, she begged to be allowed to make it less heavy. The Queen hesitated, then consented, and the girl removed a quantity of material without much altering the appearance. When she returned it the Queen took it with a sigh and kissed her. That she wore the bonnet afterwards was a triumph for the Princess.

The marriage treaty was signed January 15, 1863, at Copenhagen, and all the royal family set to work to provide a trousseau fit for the future Queen of

England. King Leopold's present was appropriately a wedding gown of Brussels lace. In Copenhagen there were parties at which the delicate and wonderful clothes were shown; in England State levees and drawing-rooms were held by the Prince of Wales and the Princess Royal, or rather the Crown Princess of Prussia, who was credited with having helped to form the match, perhaps because propinquity to the Prussian Alexandrina made her prefer the other girl for her brother, of whom she was very fond.

Now the Queen had determined to do everything just exactly as things had been done under the Prince Consort, and, though a tremendous crowd was expected at these State gatherings, the order went forth that they should be held in the little rooms of St. James's Palace, and this in spite of the fact that when the last large sum had been spent by the public in renovating Buckingham Palace it had been understood that such ceremonies were to take place there. *Punch* dubbed St. James's Palace as "the house of detention for ladies," for many hours had to be spent before and after the ecstatic moment of kissing, or pretending to kiss, the hand of a princess. It took hours for the carriages to crawl to the entry, hours to get up the stairs and wait one's turn in an ante-room of small dimensions, and sometimes hours to get away again—

"Thus on they struggled, inch by inch, and stair  
By stair; now losing, now a little gaining;  
As though it were a life-and-death affair;  
As though, indeed, this courtly presentation  
Worked out their future and their whole salvation."

Victoria had made one concession to the comfort of her callers: she had allowed some chairs to be put in the room where the ladies waited, that those who were strong enough and quick enough to fight for them might rest. Others stood until their turns came, and then each lady, summoning with difficulty a pleasant expression to her jaded face, made her graceful curtsey.

The coming away was more terrible than the going, for then the jamming was remorseless and inevitable, the waiting for the carriages being in a long, narrow corridor, something like a tunnel, in which there was no hope of movement. Angry and impatient, some dame would hear the official announcing her carriage, and be entirely unable to get near the door even by the most strenuous fighting. So the vehicle would move on, and she would have to wait while it made the whole round again. Pretty girls would emerge at last with their skirts in rags, a portly duchess would beg the closely wedged bystanders "just to stoop and look for my diamond bracelet," worth perhaps the purchase money of a large estate; and every one would be crying—

"Oh, what a shame it is! Surely the Queen cannot know what goes on?"

No cup of tea or refreshment of any kind was offered to the victims of this atrociously bad management, and a woman fainting from exhaustion was a recurring episode, regarded by all officials with perfect calmness.

Well might indignant correspondents write to the

papers and suggest that if people were worthy of being received at Court they were worthy to enter the Queen's own spacious house, and remind those responsible of the broken faith over Buckingham Palace.

The Prince's levee in March was as bad as the Princess's drawing-room, more than two thousand men attending it.

“Garments were cleft of them,  
Horsehair was reft of them,  
What pen can write of them?  
How at the sight of them  
Gents-at-arms wondered.  
As to the Presence there,  
Draggled and damaged men  
Rushed, crushed and thrust along,  
All that was left of them ;  
First the two thousand,  
Then the seven hundred.”

There was one presentation made at this levee of which the newspapers said : “No event for some years past has excited so much indignation.” The Duke of Wellington had brought with him a gentleman, rich, well bred, and one of the principal guarantors to the Commissioners of the Exhibition of 1862. As the crowd fought its way up the stairs the stranger stumbled against Justice Baron Pollock, who had an extraordinary memory for faces. The Baron told what he remembered to some official, but the presentation had taken place and the levee was over. The gentleman in question had many years before made a mistake upon a cheque, and had been sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. He was what was known as “one of Jebb's pet lambs”; that is to say, he had

come under the humane prison reformatory ideas of Sir Joshua Jebb, and so had been able honourably to reinstate himself in the commercial world. But his ambition flew too high : wishing to make friends with royalty, he found himself publicly advertised as unfit for that honour.

The storm of indignation which shook the papers over the unbearable conditions of royal receptions made no impression upon the Queen, and the girlish Alexandra held a Court for Victoria in the following May, at which 2,200 people attended, and confusion was worse confounded. To add to the faintings, losses and torn rags, empty carriages got mixed up with full ones, so the presentations lasted until six o'clock, and even the royal hosts were exhausted. As Henry Greville remarked : "What was never done before, they retired for a short time to refresh and repose themselves." The poor guests had no chance of that relief, however.

It was hoped that Queen Victoria would make the wedding the occasion for emerging from her seclusion, and that she would honour the bridal pair by attending as a queen. This hope was summarily destroyed, and so much stress was laid upon the intention of holding a quiet wedding that *Punch* declared that the ceremony would take place in an obscure Berkshire village, noted only for its old castle and non-sanitary arrangements, and suggested that the secrecy of the proceedings should be carried out to the utmost, the only public intimation being in the first column of *The Times*—

"On the 13th inst., at Windsor, by Dr. Longley, assisted by Dr. Thomson, Albert Edward England, K.G., to Alexandra Denmark. No cards."

The settlements had been granted without much parliamentary bickering, being £40,000 to the Prince and £10,000 to the Princess, which, with £60,000 from the Duchy of Cornwall, was thought to be sufficient.

The entry of the young Princess into England and her progress through London must have been one of the most stirring events of her life; pleasure was there certainly, but pleasure pointed by alarm is unforgettable. At Gravesend half London seemed to be floating in gaily decorated craft to welcome her, and from there to the Bricklayers' Arms everything, even the haystacks and hedges, blushed with royal bunting; but the drive thence to Paddington, that was absolutely thrilling!

Queen Victoria had made all arrangements; she was always particular in her instructions about any great function. The carriages sent to meet the Princess, who was to drive through London before the eyes of all England, were thus described by Lord Malmesbury in his *Memoirs*—

"I was never more surprised and disappointed. . . . The carriages looked old and shabby and the horses very poor, with no trappings, not even rosettes, and no outriders. In short, the shabbiness of the whole cortège was beyond anything one could imagine, every one asking, 'Who is the Master of the Horse?'"

Another order given was that the carriages should trot, and that, though the way lay through the city,

the City Fathers should take no part in the welcoming, because their heavy State carriages would have to go at a walk. It is really difficult not to wonder whether the latter order was not issued that the gorgeous city coaches should not contrast too luxuriously with the humbler royal equipages. But such a loud outcry was made over the “trotting” order that it was rescinded, and the Lord Mayor and Aldermen were allowed to escort the Princess from London Bridge to Temple Bar, the Duke of Buccleugh, Lord High Steward of Westminster, and the Dean and Chapter heading the procession from Temple Bar to Hyde Park Corner.

The Lord Mayor, however, used his opportunity with too much pride, by refusing all help, either from the military or the Force, and relied entirely upon his own five hundred police managing the crowd. But London Bridge and the streets were absolutely blocked; the people pressed against the horses, caught hold of the sides of the carriages, and in a struggling, shouting turmoil, with waving hands and arms and open throats, shifting and clinging like figures in a nightmare, they strove and contended to hold place and get nearest to the carriage which held the Princess.

This extended to beyond the Mansion House—the carriages crawling along inch by inch—where the scene was terrible. Between the solid walls of people no exit could be found; fainting women and boys were with difficulty saved from being trampled on; a dead or dying baby was held up over the crowd, and a woman was seen to throw a child into one of the carriages to save its life.

When turning the corner of the Mansion House, the Princess's carriage swayed beneath the pressure and she put out her hand. It was at once grasped by some one in the crowd. An old Irishwoman clutched the side of the carriage, and Alexandra said—

“Oh, I hope you won't be hurt!” Upon which the woman responded, “God bless you, my darling!”

The Princess, feeling the benison to be of good omen, replied, “Thank you, thank you!”

The equerries around the carriage showed great good humour, and effectually persuaded the multitude to give way foot by foot before the horses, Lord Alfred Paget betraying a skill in chaffing which made every one who heard him his friend.

From Chancery Lane the route was better kept. At Cambridge House in Piccadilly the royal carriage came to a halt, for upon the balcony stood the veteran Lord Palmerston and his wife, with whom salutations were exchanged.

At Slough, whence the royal party drove to Windsor, the horses became rebellious; the leaders of the first carriage jibbed, those of the second turned round upon the wheelers, and the harness got entangled, which created a scene of great confusion. However, the wise man has said that all's well that ends well, and the little Princess *did* get to Windsor that night, and had three days in which to rest for her very sumptuous wedding, which “was so grand as to be quite overpowering,” judged the courtier Lord Malmesbury.

The brilliant show may be imagined; every one

agreed that the bride was extraordinarily beautiful, but Lord Ronald Gower gave the palm to another : “The finest part of the ceremonial as regards the persons present was the magnificent appearance and presence of Princess Mary [of Cambridge] as she seemed to sail up the nave of this gorgeous chapel. She looked the very embodiment of earthly magnificence.” Princess Mary, still unwed at thirty, though many had wanted her ! But there seemed always some reason, State or otherwise, why the suitors, great and little, should one after the other be discarded.

Above the brilliant scene, in a windowed box, sat the Queen, almost hidden in *crêpe*; one apart; feeling gladness for these young people, yet streaming with tears for thinking of her own wedding day. Well, it was the Victorian way, and there’s no more to be said.

On nearing the altar the Princess curtseyed deeply to the Queen, and her maids, unprepared for this, thought they ought to kneel ; then, finding their mistake, suddenly straightened themselves, while the Prince stood irresolute, and Jenny Lind’s sweet voice flooded the building to an accompaniment composed by Prince Albert. Meanwhile the Queen’s first grandson, the amiable little Prince William of Prussia, now the most dishonoured man in the world, was biting the bare Highland legs of his two uncles, Arthur and Leopold, between whom he stood, and who were responsible for his quiet and decorous behaviour.

After six-and-twenty royal or imperial hands had signed the register, and after the hundredweight of

cake had been cut and all was over, the gallant company started back to London. The Windsor station-master had forgotten to keep the platforms clear, and had also not troubled to suit the train accommodation to the company. So great ladies and courtly gentlemen stepped from the castle carriages into the midst of a crowd of sightseers, plentifully besprinkled by roughs and thieves. Among the results recorded I find Lady Westminster, wearing half a million pounds' worth of diamonds, saving her property by scrambling into a third-class carriage, the venerable Lady Palmerston hunting vainly for a seat, and at last finding one unoccupied in the third class, and Count Lavradio complaining that his diamond star had been torn from his chest.

For a week afterwards the papers were inundated with letters from indignant Englishmen, who complained that Queen Victoria had failed to honour either the Princess or the nation in allowing shabby carriages to form part of a great London procession. Said one such in *The Times*: "Our Queen's equipages have not of late years been remarkable either for their beauty or for the taste and finish with which they are turned out, and certainly the servants, carriages and cattle selected to convey the Danish Princess through joyful London attired in its holiday clothing must have been the very dregs of that singularly ill-appointed establishment known as the Royal Mews of Pimlico."

The popular belief was that the impoliteness shown was the result of a dispute between the Queen and

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her advisers twenty-three years earlier. "Etiquette forbids," said the Ministers, "that a young prince should use the Queen's State carriage before he becomes her husband, or is in any way connected with the State." Victoria was said to have remembered this, and would allow no greater distinction to be shown to her new prospective daughter-in-law than had been shown to her own beloved; indeed, not so much, as in her youthful days the Queen's stables were excellently appointed.

## CHAPTER IV

### A STRONG PRUSSIA

"*Lorenzo.* A prince above all things must seem devout; but there is nothing so dangerous to his state as to regard his promise or his oath.

"*Alphonsus.* Tush, fear not me, my promises are sound,  
But he that trusts them shall be sure to fail."

*George Chapman:*

'*Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany.*'

"I know that our dear angel Albert always regarded a strong Prussia as a necessity, for which, therefore, it is a sacred duty for me to work."—*Queen Victoria in a letter to Ernst of Saxe-Coburg.*

ONE of the most remarkable sentiments held by Queen Victoria was her affection for Germany in general and Prussia in particular, she regarding these countries as a sacred care bequeathed to her by her beloved prince, and whenever she mentioned her desire for "a strong Prussia," she would add a pious reference to the departed Albert.

Frederick William IV, the Prussian king who was set aside in 1857 as insane, had stood sponsor for Victoria's eldest son; his brother William, when Regent, married his son William Frederick to Victoria's eldest daughter, and he visited England many times. But the friendship of the sovereigns did not mean the friendship of the public, nor did it include political amity. Constant annoyance was felt

in Berlin over the long letters from the Prince Consort advising the King how to rearrange his form of government, letters often sent through Baron Stockmar; indeed, the perusal of a chapter or so of that period of *The Life of the Prince Consort* will show what a passion Albert had for interfering in other people's concerns.

In Berlin this was violently resented, especially when William became Regent. It was said that England had dared to interfere with Prussian politics and that Stockmar had come over the Channel with the new "Prussian Ministry all cut and dried in his pocket." From this time Prussian outbursts against England became a "hardy annual," the anger being mainly directed against Albert, and after his death against British influence, "the scheming Queen," and the "English" Crown Princess. Victoria never did make concessions to public opinion, and consistently under-rated the value of the sentiments of a people; so this resentment made no impression on her feeling for Germany, and she still worked for Albert's ideal of a "strong Prussia" and a "united Germany."

When William was crowned King of Prussia at Königsburg—only the second Prussian king who went through the coronation ceremony—he boldly asserted that the Prussian kings "received their crown from God," a sentiment with which Victoria entirely agreed. As a writer in *The Quarterly Review* for April 1901 stated, though she "probably would not have signed a paper saying she believed in the divine right of kings, in her heart she never questioned that she was

the anointed of the Lord." That the first King of Prussia had bought his crown one hundred and sixty years earlier from the Emperor of Germany did not seem to affect the claim made by the new monarch at all, and when his bombastic utterances were strongly commented upon in the English Press, a very furore of retort arose in Berlin, England being roundly invited to attend to her own affairs and leave Prussia alone. The Queen again sympathized, feeling very angry with *The Times* and other censorious journals.

In 1862 William had so much trouble with his Parliament and his people that he had decided to abdicate, in spite of his divine right, and had already written out the deed of abdication when Bismarck came to his aid, and still further frightened him by his drastic views and deeds.

"I can perfectly well see what the end will be," he said, after one of Bismarck's addresses in the Landstag. "Over there in front of the Opera House, under my windows, they will cut off your head, and mine a little later," for he was obsessed by the fate of Charles I and Strafford. But his Minister laughed and went on his victorious way, and William became his grateful, if sometimes rebellious, servant.

With Bismarck the occasional anger of Prussia became a settled jealousy against England, and though for the sake of Albert's idea of a strong Prussia, Victoria always worked for Bismarck's policy, she had a great dislike for the man, a dislike which he reciprocated fully in a mean and jealous way, condescending to coarse abuse of the Queen in conversation with

his entourage, and imputing evil and cunning reasons for all that she did. This dislike he extended in double strength to the Crown Princess, and all through his life he did his utmost to foster adverse criticism of her in Germany. He claimed in the name of the King extraordinary rights over her household, and always had his spies placed in official positions about her.

In 1864 there was a family quarrel between the two Courts. Count Philip Eulenburg, a young sub-lieutenant at Bonn, whose brother later became, in Bismarck's pay, master of the Crown Princess's Household, was unintentionally jostled in the street by a portly stranger; Eulenburg replied with foul and insulting language and, being answered in kind, drew his sword and cut the man down, he being so badly injured that he died in the hospital. He was a Frenchman named Ott, a chef to Victoria, and then in Germany in attendance on the Duke of Edinburgh. The Queen and her son were very indignant, and acrimonious discussions took place between England, France and Germany, which lasted for months, Eulenburg in the end being sentenced to pay heavy damages to Ott's widow and undergo a year's imprisonment in a fortress.

This was, however, but a ripple on the surface of the Queen's enduring love for Germany, and she took her stand as a buffer between her people and the aggressive German Government; she eagerly married her children to Germans, asking nothing in return in wealth or position, nothing, in fact, but the bridegroom

and his nationality, but in these arrangements she did occasionally allow herself the gratification of spiting the Chancellor, Bismarck.

Queen Victoria has been regarded as a great statesman, but she did not show that quality in her dealings with Prussia; for during the first ten years of her widowhood Prussia put a ring of blood and fire round Germany; Poland, Denmark, Austria and France being successively attacked and more or less ruined. Englishmen had deeply desired to help some of these weaker countries, but Victoria fought every one—her people, her Government, the Opposition, her family, in her determination to let a strong Prussia and a united Germany arise. She consulted, not the safety of Europe or of England, not the balance of European power, then or in the future, but what she knew to have been the ideals of the Prince Consort. She had a bad time with her people, but she would have endured anything rather than have put out a finger against that German ideal by assisting one of the victims. She seemed honestly to endorse the sarcastic words of *Punch*—

“May Heaven further walk over Prussia and bless her,  
And still of her neighbours’ possessions possess her.”

In July 1862 Bismarck was in London, and he outlined his future policy before Disraeli over the dining-table of Baron Brunow, saying—

“When I take over the Prussian Government” (which he did two months later) “my first care will be to reorganize the army, with or without the Landstag. As soon as the army is sufficiently strong I shall seize

a pretext to declare war on Austria, dissolve the Diet, reduce the small states and give Germany national unity under Prussia. I have come here to tell this to the Ministers of the Queen."

It was a policy of which, except probably for the attack on Austria, Victoria approved, and which she helped Bismarck to carry out by an attitude of strict non-interference.

Bismarck, regarded as so "great," did more evil than good; he made Prussia physically, but he destroyed her soul. He derided the arts, debased the Press, destroyed the Parliament, and tore up "scraps of paper" at will. He fostered the seeds of mental and moral degradation, indigenous in the Prussian, the fruit of which to-day has made of all Germany an outcast among the nations, a thing so unpardonable that the whole world is aghast at the sight.

Bismarck's quarrel with Austria was that she had recently taken the initiative in calling together representatives of all the States to consider a plan for a united Germany, and this naturally pointed to the predominance of Austria. Of all the kingdoms and states Prussia alone stood aside from the great conference called at Frankfort. King William was very grieved over this, for he wanted to take part, and saw himself at the head of affairs there. The Dowager Queen, Queen Augusta and the Crown Princess all urged him to attend, and the King of Saxony visited him to make a personal appeal, with the result that William promised to go, and to send a signed letter to that effect. As soon as his visitor had departed,

however, Bismarck entered, and had a long interview with his king, at the end of which, to quote his own words—

“I only succeeded with the utmost difficulty in preventing him [writing the letter]; I literally hung on to his coat tails. . . . His Majesty lay on the sofa and had an attack of hysterical weeping, and when at length I had succeeded in wringing from him the letter of refusal, I was myself so weak and exhausted I could scarcely stand.”

Having got this letter, Bismarck sent for a regiment to guard the palace and so prevent any one else from having access to his “master.”

This abstention of Prussia was a great disappointment and cause of anxiety to Queen Victoria, who went to Coburg that she might be nearer the scene of action, and there she invited both the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia to meet her, hoping to induce Prussia to join the Conference. She could not understand its isolated position, and saw it becoming an Esau among the nations; reprobated as it was by all because of its dastardly deed during the Polish rising, when it had deliberately given permission to the Russians to pursue Polish rebels through Prussian territory. From Coburg Victoria wrote to Duke Ernst, then at Frankfort—

“I must believe that Prussia’s position is growing worse and worse, and I am afraid she will have few voices in the Assembly of Sovereigns to speak in her interest. All the more would I beg you, as much as lies in your power, to prevent a weakening of Prussia,

which not only my feeling resists—on account of the future of our children—but which would surely also be contrary to the interests of Germany; and I know that our dear angel Albert always regarded a strong Prussia as a necessity, for which, therefore, it is a sacred duty for *me* to work."

King William, attended by Bismarck, went to see his royal cousin at Coburg. Bismarck was not admitted to the interview, but his influence was on the King; and when it was over the Queen was extremely depressed, for William had told her nothing of Prussia's hopes and plans. After the Conference her meeting with the Emperor of Austria took place at Castle Ehrenburg, and of this interview Duke Ernst has left us a description.

At the foot of the staircase stood the Queen with her children on either side—Victoria, Alice, Helena, Alfred, Leopold and Beatrice, while behind her stood her Ministers and officers of State. Francis Joseph entered the great hall with his suite, and the Queen kissed him on both cheeks and introduced her children. At two o'clock, after luncheon, Victoria invited him to an interview at which Ernst formed a third. He tells us that the Queen "maintained the usual pleasant level of her character," that she first complimented Francis Joseph on the way in which he had conducted the Conference, and said that she had no intention of meddling with high diplomacy, but would make her appeal on purely personal grounds.

"She then remarked that it was not her business to enter into the actual political questions pending in

Germany, but she had a personal request at heart. Her maternal anxiety for her children rendered it a matter of heart with her to recommend them to the Emperor. Whatever might be the actual difference between the views and policy of Prussia and Austria, she at all events hoped one thing, that the Emperor would never let the position and the rights of her dear children in Berlin be prejudiced.

"The Emperor was visibly surprised at this address. He replied in generally complimentary terms, but did not touch on the actual political question. If he left Coburg satisfied, that may be partly due to the effect of his having found, in this meeting with the Queen of England, a proof of how greatly his Frankfort expedition had contributed to raise his prestige with non-German monarchs."

To King Leopold Ernst wrote—

"The Emperor's interview with Victoria has passed off very well. It was an exalting scene, without stiffness."

This was the interview which gained for Queen Victoria her first definite reputation as a statesman! No one then knew what had passed at these meetings, but it was believed that her thoughts were upon weighty European affairs; and all the time she was merely begging first one king and then another to be kind to her children who were settled in antagonistic parts of Germany. Bismarck must have been as much surprised as amused.

As has been said, Prussia had, in its anxiety for Russian friendship, played a dishonourable part to-

wards the Poles, and had therefore been subjected to strong criticism in the English Press; but Prussia intended to go further. Her aim was to beat Austria down from her pre-eminence in Europe and to seize Schleswig-Holstein, but she went warily to work.

Alexandra's father, as Christian IX, had succeeded to the Crown of Denmark in accordance with the treaty of 1852, but Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg [what terrible titles!], who thought he had a claim upon the Danish throne in virtue of his mother having been a Danish princess, demanded the kingdom, treaty or no treaty, and in spite of the fact that his father had taken a large sum of money to settle this claim. The great Diet of German States backed him up, among them being Hanover, Saxony and Coburg.

This was Bismarck's opportunity, and he called upon Austria as the chief German power, and as once the possessor of Schleswig, to help him in upholding the treaty. It was so honest and simple that it deceived Victoria, but it deceived no one else, least of all Denmark, who knew the ways of Prussia, and she turned to England in her trouble, relying upon the aid which had been virtually promised during the last eleven years. Palmerston, Granville and Russell were prepared to give it, the first saying in the House in July 1863—

“We are convinced—I am convinced, at least—that if any violent attempt were made to overthrow the rights and interfere with the independence of Denmark, those who made the attempt would find in the

result that it would not be Denmark alone with which they would have to contend."

Every party, except the peace-at-any-price party, was with him; and the Danes, counting on us, prepared to defend themselves.

The question was a three-sided one, and like Christianity it divided families and friends. On one side of the triangle were the Ministry, the majority of the Opposition, the Prince and Princess of Wales and the people of England, all for Denmark. On the second, upholding Frederick of Augustenburg, were most of the German states, the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia—in spite of Bismarck—Alice and Louis of Hesse and Ernst of Coburg. The third party consisted of Prussia and Austria, and in consonance with the Prince Consort's desire for a strong Prussia, Queen Victoria refused to act in any way which was against the interest of this third party. She was constantly confronted by the white, anxious face of Alexandra, and guarded herself by peremptorily refusing to listen to any word about Denmark from the Prince of Wales. Her daughter Victoria urged the claims of the Augstenburger with cleverness and asperity. Princess Alice did the same thing with gentle insistence. In the autumn, when the Crown Prince and Princess were staying at Windsor, with the intention of improving their kindly love for their new sister-in-law, the triangular discussions became so bitter that at last Victoria forbade the mention of the subject altogether, a course which did not tend to draw the sisters-in-law together.

Duke Ernst wrote to the Queen, urging her to take some action on his side, and she wrote him a long letter, from which the following is a paragraph—

“ You seem quite to overlook the fact that England is bound by the treaty of 1852, and, greatly as I may deplore the manner in which that treaty was concluded, the Government here has *no other choice* but to adhere to it. Our beloved Albert *could not* have acted otherwise.”

The English Cabinet agreed upon a dispatch to be sent to Austria and Prussia, declaring that the Government would be forced to take a hostile attitude if Schleswig-Holstein were invaded. The Queen energetically opposed its being sent, and Lord John Russell resigned. “ The Queen will not hear of going to war with Germany,” noted Lord Malmesbury in his diary, and he added that the country and the Government would like to fight for the Danes, “ but found great difficulty in the opposition of the Queen.”

Victoria sent for the leader of the Opposition, Lord Derby, when she found that not only the Liberals under Palmerston, but the great body of the Tories were in belligerent mood, and made him promise that, no matter what his party wanted, he would resist every idea of war.

When the address from the Throne was drawn up in 1864, Lord Palmerston’s definite Danish pronouncement produced disagreement in the Cabinet, so a second and milder speech was prepared and sent to the Queen; this she promptly returned as impossible, and it was not until the evening before the opening

of Parliament that she gave her assent to what was publicly regarded as the most futile speech which had ever emanated from a responsible ruler. The Prince of Wales was present the next day to listen to a statement of which the most important item was a paragraph of flowery congratulation upon the birth of his first son, and the next one of adulation of his mother—

“Her Majesty is honoured and admired not only in Europe, but throughout the world; her virtues live again in her children, and all their Lordships fondly hope that the infant Prince, who was born under these auspices and brought up under these happy influences, will at some future day reign over this realm with the same brilliant qualities which have adorned the reign of her present Majesty.”

To the Commons the address began with—

“Three years ago we had to lament the loss of a great and good prince, a loss from which her Majesty has not yet recovered, and from which we are afraid she never will recover.”

It is almost unbelievable that in a time of such public excitement the Queen could have sanctioned such puerilities, and that in this speech Poland, then being slowly martyred, was not mentioned, the war in America received no word, nor did the English soldiers fighting in China. As to Denmark, the House was simply reminded that by the treaty the powers had agreed that no territory should be filched from Denmark; but another clause, which showed that each Power had individually bound itself to protect

Denmark, was ignored. In the discussion Lord Derby hoped paradoxically that we were not committed to a disastrous war with Germany nor to the betrayal of Denmark, which had put her trust in us.

Well might the Austrian ambassador, Count Vitzthum, say joyfully—

“The victory of the peace party is a victory of the Queen maligned, insulted and reproached with German sympathies. Her Majesty has checkmated the dictatorship of her Prime Minister, and beaten him three times over in his own Cabinet on a question of war or peace. The Queen has recognized the true interests and true wishes of her people, and not allowed herself to be misled by the gossip of the drawing-room or the declamation of the daily press.”

And well might the Americans say when they were pressing their claims for the roving acts of the *Alabama* at the Geneva Conference, that England's conduct over the Danish war proved that England would never fight again.

The Danes fought like heroes, but it was a foregone conclusion that alone they must be beaten. Prussia was then as Prussia is to-day, though less brutal. She bombarded unfortified towns—

“Danish homes our ordnance shattered,  
Dashed out Danish women's brains,  
Danish children's bodies shattered,  
Smashed both great and little Danes.”

In a duet which *Punch* gave between William and Francis Joseph occurred these lines, accentuating the blatant Prussian piety so familiar to us to-day—

"*William.* And we smashed the young fry where we pitched  
the live shell;

So I turn up my eyes and go down on my knees,  
And give thanks that I'm able to do as I please.

"*Francis Joseph.* We'll work our omnipotent will,  
We'll torture and burn and slay.

Let but England and France keep still,  
And a fig for what they say."

Palmerston, his force of character relaxed by age, had come to heel, and there was little to be feared from him, but the satisfaction the Queen felt in this was dispelled by the fact that now the Opposition was crying out against ignoble inaction. Lord Derby's sympathies were with his party, and he was on the point of yielding when he was again summoned to Windsor and sharply reminded of his promise. But Disraeli was left, and he was preparing a vote of censure on the Government's foreign policy.

The usual course was being followed of summoning a Conference in London of all concerned, *except* Schleswig-Holstein, to see if peace could not be arranged, and a month's truce was proclaimed. Bismarck's representative arrived, and so delayed matters, ten days late, that affairs might be left in a favourable position for Prussia when hostilities recommenced. The Conference failed, as it was bound to do, and Victoria told Palmerston that she would never consent to England's participation if the war continued, instructing him at the same time to dissolve Parliament if the vote of censure was carried; so says Duke Ernst in his memoirs.

Queen Victoria's popularity had decreased when she

refused to join in any attempt to stop the monstrous punishments dealt out to the Poles by Russia—Prince Albert had always condemned the Poles—and now over Denmark it fell to zero. Exchanging letters with Duke Ernst over the Conference, she wrote of loving Germany with all her heart, “especially our part,” and of having done all she could for peace. “I have been attacked here—what was still wanting in my sad position—on account of my German sympathies, and a few silly people have been giving out that I have been hindering the Government in its actions. . . . I would most earnestly request you not to mention me, nor lay any stress on the little merit I have had, as it might greatly aggravate my position, difficult and painful as it already is.”

Disraeli’s vote of censure was a crushing attack upon the policy which the Queen had imposed upon Palmerston and which Palmerston had allowed her to impose. “Within twelve months we have been twice repulsed at St. Petersburg. We have menaced Austria, and Austria has allowed our menaces to pass her like the wind. We have threatened Prussia, and Prussia has defied us. Our objurgations have rattled over the head of the German Diet, and the German Diet has treated them with contempt. During the last few months there is scarcely a form of diplomatic interference which has not been suggested or adopted. . . . Couriers from the Queen have been scouring Europe with the exuberant futility of abortive projects. . . . My policy is the honour of England and the peace of Europe, and the noble lord has betrayed both.”

In a flash of prescience Disraeli said, "If there is a cordial alliance between England and France war is most difficult; but if there is a thorough understanding between England, France and Russia war is impossible." It might have been true then, but to-day the "strong Prussia" has grown so strong that the three allies have to fight it side by side.

Palmerston was only saved from defeat by Bright and his little peace party.

It has so often been stated that Queen Victoria was a true constitutional sovereign, that her power over State affairs was purely nominal, and that she abided most loyally by the decisions of her Ministers, that many people have believed it. No greater mistake concerning the Queen was ever made. She considered it her duty to express her opinion on every subject, and as far as was consistent with safety to impose her will upon her Ministers. In extreme cases she would give way and sanction something which she disliked, but this was only done to avoid some dangerous crisis, the two most notable incidents being the passing of the Irish Church Bill and the abolition of purchase of commissions in the army. In these Victoria did what Gladstone wanted, not that she agreed with him or because she thought it her duty to be loyal to the Government, but because she desired to save the House of Lords from the threatened effect of their own uncompromising opposition.

When the Danes were finally beaten the aggressors agreed that six years were to be allowed to the inhabitants of the two duchies in which they might

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decide whether they would choose to belong to Denmark or Prussia and Austria. This was Bismarck's way of leaving the question open and so preventing Austria from taking possession of any part of the land, the whole of which he intended for himself. In a year and a half his hunger for possession grew ravenous. He was satisfied that there was nothing to fear from an Anglo-French alliance, that, as some one has put it—

"However Palmerston might bark, Queen Victoria would never allow him to bite a Hohenzollern."

So he followed the usual Prussian course, massed troops on some one else's territory—in this case, Hesse-Cassel, as a good jumping-off point, and when Austria, in alarm, brought her troops to defend her borderland he shouted aloud to all Europe that Austria was treacherously mobilizing her army and starting a war. Hesse-Cassel, indignant, sided with Austria, and when that country was defeated at the end of six weeks, was promptly swallowed by Prussia, as were Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, part of Hesse-Darmstadt, and other small states.

The Queen had watched this attack upon Austria with grief, and had recognized that there was, after all, something of the wolf in Prussia. She wrote to Lord Granville, "Prussia should at least be made aware of what she and her Government and every honest man in Europe must think of the gross and unblushing violation of every assurance and pledge that she had given which Prussia has been guilty of."

But Victoria did not realize that she had, by her

abstention from a just course, put into Prussia's hands a powerful weapon against her own country; that she had given it possession of that seaboard for which it longed, and that henceforth its navy, helped later by another present from her, was to grow until it was thought strong enough to menace England.

If she deprecated the methods of Prussia, the results were not altogether disagreeable. Prussia was growing strong, and as a French writer, M. Abel Chevalley, says, "the progress towards the unity of Germany enchanted her! She saw her daughter an empress in the future."

Austria had once been the Imperial head of Germany, henceforth the Emperor knew himself to be second to the family of Hohenzollern, which in earlier years had felt distinguished by being the cupbearers to the Hapsburgs. The blind King of Hanover and his son were sent wandering, and Victoria telegraphed to Duke Ernst, "Thank God, you are safe. It is too dreadful. Where is the poor King and his son?" To which she received answer that the King and his son had passed through Gotha early that morning in the best of health.

## CHAPTER V

### FAMILY GAINS AND LOSSES

"Really I do not think it *possible* for any one in the world to be *happier* or *as* happy as I am. He is an Angel, and his kindness and affection for me is really touching. To look in those dear eyes, and that dear, sunny face, is enough to make me adore him."—*Queen Victoria on her marriage.*

"I could hardly bring myself to believe that this was really death, that which I had so often shuddered at and felt afraid of; there was nothing there dreadful or appalling, only a heavenly calm and peace."—*Crown Princess on the death of the King of Prussia.*

IF Queen Victoria had much anxiety to endure in the 'sixties through mistaken foreign policy and a strongly stirred people, she yet enjoyed many of those domestic pleasures which deal with life in its most primitive aspect. There were grandchildren to welcome into the world, brides to help into partnership—though that word would but ill express Victoria's idea of the marriage state—and deaths to call forth her tears and sympathy.

In August 1865 the Queen went again to Coburg, with her three youngest daughters and Prince Leopold, that they might be present at the unveiling of a bronze statue to the Prince Consort in the square of his native town.

Princess Helena was then nineteen, and either from

the usual cause of mutual attraction or through maternal policy she became engaged to Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Augustenburg, brother to the husband of her Majesty's niece, Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe-Langenburg (the daughter of Princess Feodore, half-sister to the Queen).

There are those who have said that this Prince Christian was brother to "the Augustenburger" who had claimed the crown of Denmark, and also that the Queen arranged the marriage that she might not only placate both Denmark and the little German states, but give at least one little blow back at Bismarck, by showing compensation to the family he had cheated. However, all this was wrong. The Augustenburger renounced his rights to his title in 1864, taking instead that of Count de Noer, and dying the following year; I have not discovered that he had a brother. His successor, who took all his long row of names, was the husband of Princess Adelaide. Thus this marriage seems to have been arranged in an ordinary way, with no underlying policy of generosity or spite.

Prince Christian was accredited with a wife, but as she was not of royal birth, royalty would have considered this no bar to a second marriage with a young girl. How easy is royal morality, especially that which is made in Germany! Nearly all the German prince-lings of that date appear to have made morganatic unions at least once in their lives, which they gaily put aside as soon as a better match offered.

The Prince had neither lands nor money, but Queen Victoria was ready to supply all that he needed; so

he resigned his position as an officer in the Prussian army, and was dowered by his mamma-in-law with £100,000 and a house at Frogmore. When the wedding took place it was announced that "none of Prince Christian's male relatives were able to attend," and Mr. *Punch* wickedly suggested that—

"Considering what the bride's brother had done for Mr. Poole [the great tailor] we should have thought that he might have made this possible, even at three months—" A remark which shows how extremely impecunious the family was believed to be.

Victoria, however, was determined that full honour should be given to Prince Christian in England, and when he approached our shores was peculiarly insistent upon the use of his title of Serene Highness. Thus the Court Circular announced—

"H.S.H. arrived in London attended by —; H.S.H. embarked from Dieppe in a Government steamer. H.S.H. was received at Dover by the naval and military authorities. A guard of honour attended H.S.H.'s departure."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* maliciously commented that "H.S.H. must be rather astonished at the pinnacle on which his betrothal to Princess Helena has put him. In their own country Serene Highnesses mostly travel about in second-class carriages and smoke cheap cigars. Here they put in motion generals, admirals, troops and paragraphs when he moves."

At the wedding the Queen for the first time allowed some modification of the ghastly garb of *crêpe* which she had lived in for four and a half years. Her dress

was of *moiré antique*, interwoven with silver; of course, there was a good deal of *crêpe* about it, but there was also a row of diamonds round the bodice and a little coronet of diamonds round the cap.

It was not in such festive robes that Victoria, a month earlier, had watched her cousin, Mary of Cambridge, marry. There had been much speculation as to why Princess Mary remained single until she was thirty-three, for there was always some one ready and waiting. In 1864 she was said to be sought by "a gallant young soldier of noble birth," upon whose suit she did not frown, all that was wanting being the Queen's consent, which was for the moment withheld. It was evidently withheld for longer than a moment, and Princess Mary had still to wait. In 1866 she met Francis, Prince of Teck, the only son of Duke Alexander of Würtemberg and a Hungarian countess—another morganatic marriage, but a faithful one! Francis, being so born, could not inherit, so his father made him Duke of Teck, gave him his blessing and congratulated him on marrying an English royalty. He was a third poor German to add to Prince Louis of Hesse and Prince Christian, but so much regard was felt for the bride that the published comments were on the whole sympathetic.

The wedding took place in the little church at Kew, in June, in the midst of a great company of princes and princesses, and the Queen entered upon the gay, brilliant scene clothed in mourning so deep that not one speck of white relieved her dress at any point.

Many were the grandchildren born to her Majesty during these ten years, chief of which were the children of the Princess of Wales. The first two years of her life in England could scarcely have been happy to the young Dane, whose mind was filled with her people and their troubles, though her anxiety was tempered by her husband's complete sympathy. At breakfast one morning an equerry thoughtlessly read out news of a Danish defeat, causing Alexandra to burst into tears, and Albert Edward's anger, it is said, would not have disgraced Henry VIII. It may be imagined that the Princess did not love Bismarck, and once when a visitor at Windsor asked Princess Beatrice what she would like for a present, the child, having consulted with Alexandra, replied—

“I want Bismarck’s head on a charger, please.”

The Princess’s eldest son came into this world two months before he was expected, and he was, therefore, unable to enjoy all the elaborate preparations which had been made for his comfort at Marlborough House. He had to be wrapped in an ordinary flannel petticoat, and was professionally examined by an ordinary Windsor practitioner bearing the ordinary name of Brown, just like any ordinary baby. Alexandra was staying at Frogmore and had gone to watch the skating on Virginia Water, leaving there at four in the afternoon; the baby was born at nine, and the London doctors and nurses arrived at eleven. Dr. Brown was probably the happiest person among them all, for he pocketed £500 for his share in the event.

The baby was, of course, very small, and some

motherly person, thinking to comfort the Princess, remarked that John Russell (who was diminutive) was a seven months' child, and was surprised to hear a scream of laughter from the bed.

Alexandra's second son was born in June 1865, he, too, being in a hurry, though he only antedated his parents' expectations by a month. Two years later a man named Alfred John Pearce published a prophecy about the young Prince George in an annual he then edited, and this was re-published in 1910 by the *Toronto Globe*. The salient part of the prophecy ran—

“From these positions [of the stars] we may conclude and predict that this prince will, if he live, become King of England, under the name of George V. . . . The Prince will in mind and taste greatly resemble his grandfather, the good and great Prince Albert. Indeed, England will be proud of her fifth King George, and his fame shall descend to posterity as one of the best and wisest of monarchs. The position of Jupiter signifies a very prosperous and peaceful reign.”

The last paragraph scarcely fulfils present-day conditions, but then King George may live so long that the present war may become but an incident in an otherwise peaceful and wise reign.

Several other children were born to the Princess, of which Louise and Victoria, both belonging to this decade, survived. Princess Alice's first daughter saw the light at Windsor in April 1863; the Crown Princess of Germany was not idle; while Princess Helena and

the Duchess of Teck both did their duty by the State.

Among those who died were four veterans : the old enemies Palmerston and Stockmar, also King Leopold and Queen Amélie of France. Of the four Pam had had the most successful life, for one cannot find that he had known fear, and he alone of the four possessed wit. Stockmar was hypochondriacal; all his life he had feared for his health, until at last he lost it. The Queen went to see him in 1862, and together they talked and wept over the dead prince, Stockmar breaking out one evening in deep lamentations, reproaching himself with being alive, and saying—

“Ah, my dear Prince, my good Prince, how happy I shall be to see you again ! That will not be long to wait.”

It was not long, for he died the next year, before the man whom he had always regarded as an enemy and that other whom he now loved best in the world, King Leopold.

“In full activity, as a soldier at the breach,” Palmerston died in October 1865, and, in spite of her long antagonism, it was at the wish of the Queen that he was buried in Westminster Abbey. The funeral service was dramatic. The hearse, which was, as usual, a forest of nodding plumes, was followed by solemn royal carriages, and then by gaudy mayoral coaches, brought from all over England and containing one hundred and forty costumed corporations. This cortège, like some huge, primeval saurian crawling to its fossil bed, slowly went to the Abbey through

sunshine; but during the ceremony there a storm broke, rain fell heavily, wind howled, and in that darkness—so dark that the clergyman was nearly invisible—the body was lowered. When the grave was covered the sun came out again.

Pam was eighty-one, and in some ways still young, active and occupied to the last week of his life. I have been told a curious story of the way in which he received his bootmaker, named Seton. An appointment would be made, and Seton would be shown into the room where Palmerston was standing at a high desk, writing. The footman would put a stool to the right and the statesman's foot would be placed on it and measured, the stool being then placed in position for the left foot. Seton would then go away without having received a word from his customer. This had gone on for twenty years, during which the two had never spoken to each other.

This bootmaker, well known in his day, also served the Prince of Wales, and the first time he went to Marlborough House he was shown into a room and left to wait. About forty minutes later the Prince came in, and, seeing a stranger, asked—

“Who are you?”

“I have come to measure your Royal Highness for a pair of boots,” was the reply.

Albert Edward rang the bell sharply, and said to the servant, “How is it that Mr. Seton has been kept waiting here forty minutes and you did not tell me? Let it never occur again.”

But then the Prince was not quite so seriously

occupied as his Prime Minister. Palmerston possessed a terse wit which sometimes flashed across the dismal speeches of the House. Thus, when some one was boringly enumerating things which we owe to the Jews, Pam replied—

“I quite agree with the honourable gentleman; many of us owe a great deal to the Jews.”

A lady once told him that her maid objected to going to the Isle of Wight again because its climate was not embracing enough. “Now what would you do with such a woman?” she asked.

“Take her to the Isle of Man next time,” was the prompt response.<sup>1</sup>

Leopold of Belgium died in December 1865, much to Victoria’s sorrow. At one time he was the most devoted friend of France, but in his later life he became intensely suspicious of Louis Napoleon, having been worked on by German intrigue to that end, for Bismarck, too, feared France, and started the policy of isolating her in Europe. It was a successful policy both with Belgium and England, for as long as Victoria lived there was no confidence between the two countries. As for Leopold, he lived in terror of Napoleon, and constantly raised the cry that the latter intended to annex Belgium. He also did much in influencing Victoria against her neighbour, continually alarming her ministers and fostering English distrust of the French.

Early the next year ex-Queen Marie Amélie, aged eighty-two, was buried at Weybridge, her body being

<sup>1</sup> *Notes from a Diary.* By Grant Duff.

followed to the grave by princes, ambassadors and ministers from almost every country in Europe, as well as from Brazil and Mexico.

In June 1867 Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico, was shot by his own subjects. His wife was the Queen's cousin, Charlotte, daughter of King Leopold, of whom she had been very fond. Charlotte came to Europe in 1866, hoping to turn Napoleon from his purpose of withdrawing all French troops from Mexico and so leaving her husband unprotected, and she went mad at her want of success. She is still alive, though it is doubtful whether her brother's stories of her continued insanity were true, for he had secured her whole fortune and it was to his interest to keep her in seclusion. The house in which she lives was entered by Germans in the autumn of 1914.

What a farce is the supreme position in a country ! Queen Amélie had fled for her life from her subjects and lived eighteen years in exile; Leopold lived in fear of the monarch next door to him; and Louis Napoleon lived in terror of assassination by the dagger. When President Lincoln was shot in 1865 Napoleon's shattered nerves made him leave Paris abruptly for Algiers, under the excuse of drinking the waters there, but—it was said—in reality to get used to the idea that a pistol was a good assassination weapon—a fact which he had always contended—and also to realize that the chances against him were now doubled.

## CHAPTER VI

### ROYAL SECLUSION

“‘ Nay, let my people see me ! ’ Kind  
Was she whom then our cheers were greeting,  
Now, would that Lady bear in mind  
That words like those will bear repeating ? ”  
*Shirley Brooks in ‘Punch.’*

“Prince Albert, the oppressively good.”—*Current Press.*

AFTER the death of Prince Albert, Queen Victoria practically buried herself; she did not put her body under the ground, it is true, but what was almost equally bad she enclosed her mind in stone, in mausoleums, statues, cairns and other *mori memento*, and to the living world she became as dead as a nun. To her family she still partly lived, and that family no doubt hoped to see her some day again fully alive, but they could scarcely have believed that two dozen years would pass before Victoria would begin to recognize the ordinary amenities of social life. Yet so it was, and this long self-indulgence in a life of privacy while clinging to the most public post in the kingdom, explains to a great extent why the nation generally feel a far deeper personal affection for Edward VII than for Queen Victoria. The fact that she was a woman saved the Queen from the full effect of her sins of omission. Men were imbued by that unhealthy sense

of what is called chivalry for womanhood which allows of two standards of right and honour for the two sexes; the men of the time were also suspicious that they could not understand such an unreasonable creature as woman, and that it was better to accede to her whims than dispute them. "Men must work and women must weep" explained the whole situation, and that Queen Victoria did weep and nurse her grief continually seemed for a time sufficient excuse for the neglect of all her public work. But there is not the slightest doubt that had a king in the same circumstances indulged his personal wishes to the exclusion of public duty, as did Queen Victoria, that which was nearly a revolution in 1867 would have been completely so, for the discontent and anger of the people was by that time intense.

Another quality which helped to save the situation was the Queen's sentimental nature, for it was an age of sentimentality, of feminine, or rather, to use the then current word, "female" foolishness and masculine superiority, an age when "females" tied their husband's neckties and laced their boots, when the "male" thought he was justified in swearing at his wife if she neglected to put the studs into his shirt, and expected her to consider herself fully compensated by his protection.

The Queen was intensely sentimental. To the end of her days she wrote birthday greetings to every child, grandchild and great-grandchild, as well as to many others; she mourned all deaths on the right anniversaries, and remembered all the marriages. With such

a nature it was understandable that she should assume perpetual mourning for the Prince Consort. At first her people responded by putting up statues to his memory, and nothing roused her so much as these evidences of sympathy. Each one was a justification for her continued mourning, and she commemorated the bereavement in every possible fashion. Thus early in her widowhood she summoned Noel Paton to Windsor to arrange the painting of a picture of "The Bereaved Family," and later she broke through her new habit of seclusion sufficiently to go to the artist's studio to see how the picture was progressing. Finding his little boy there, and always loving children, she is said to have asked him if he would not kiss her, to which he replied "No." Being asked if he knew who she was, he answered—

"Yes, you are the Queen of England, and you killed Queen Mary, so I don't love you." An answer which probably did not displease her, as she, too, disliked Queen Elizabeth for the same cause.

Early in 1862 great exertions were being made to raise subscriptions for an Albert memorial in London, which were responded to but slowly; and to his memory the Royal Horticultural Gardens were inaugurated by the Prince of Wales. The Queen paid her first visit since her widowhood to the metropolis the following year to see them.

Her first care was the mausoleum at Frogmore, which was built as a cross with the funeral cell in the centre, that part being lit by windows in the clerestory. The roof was of copper, bearing a square tower sur-

mounted by a cross. The doorway was guarded by monoliths of Aberdeen granite, and the whole exterior was faced with a mixture of granite from Aberdeen and Guernsey.

The Queen was never tired of adding to the interior adornments of this mourning house, I had almost said this place of worship, until in 1890 its effect was sumptuous rather than austere. A great picture of Christ emerging from the tomb, with Roman soldiers hiding under their shields in fear at the triumph over death, hung over the altar; on one side was a picture of the crucifixion, and on the other one of the visit of the disciples to the empty tomb. Four bronze angels supported the sarcophagus, upon which rested a recumbent figure of the Prince in white marble. A beautiful marble statue of Princess Alice later occupied a recess. Before the tomb were placed three rows of chairs, the first devoted to the Queen and her children, the second to lesser royalties and principal ladies, and the third to other ladies and gentlemen. Such was the spot which for a long time became the centre of the Queen's death-in-life.

In the Highlands a cairn, its base forty feet square, was raised on Craig Lowrigan, where it could be seen "all down the valley." "I and my poor six orphans all placed stones on it; and our initials as well as those of the three absent ones are to be carved on the stones all round it," wrote Victoria. This cairn was the subject of a stupid sermon by a Dr. Candlish, a leading light among the Free Kirkers who took umbrage at the inscription, from *The Wisdom of Solomon*, "He being

made perfect in a short time fulfilled a long time. For his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked."

The Free Kirkers, having justly desired to choose their own pastors, had years before rebelled against lay patronage, and had provoked the determined opposition of the Queen, who considered that the royal prerogative was in essence being assailed. Therefore they were ready to condemn all English ecclesiasticism, and Candlish declared that this text was a studied insult to the "Bible that Scotland loved," to the doctrine of Inspiration, to Scotland and [which was certainly true] to the generation from which the Prince had been removed by death. It was "shabby, flimsy, a wretched shred and a sham without even an allusion to blessed immortality."

The English were aghast at this attack on the Queen, and Candlish had to publish an apology, which was really almost as bad as the offence, as he declared that he did not for a moment think that the Queen had chosen such a text, but had been led away by the evil advice of English clergymen.

The Scot is a cute person, and a religious publisher seized this opportunity of pushing a new edition of the Bible which he had ready, with this flourish of advertising verbosity—

"A copy has been presented to the Prince of Wales and the Princess Alexandra through Lord Shaftesbury—who have been graciously pleased, especially the Princess, that brightest of orbs in the firmament of living beauty, to express high admiration of it."

Truly religion in the beloved Highlands was on its trial !

It was in the autumn of 1863 and at Aberdeen that Victoria appeared for the first time in public, and then mutely, to unveil a statue to Albert, and to declare through the lips of Sir George Grey that she had come "to proclaim in public the unbounded reverence and admiration, the devoted love that fills my heart for him whose loss must throw a lasting gloom over all my future life."

Such words in such circumstances would to-day seem greatly wanting in reticence and dignity, but upon this subject Victoria knew no reticence, and she followed this unveiling and declaration with many other events of the same kind both in Scotland and England.

In time "statues to the Prince almost covered the land," as Gladstone once said, and even Ireland tried to do its best. But at Dublin the movement met a check. The Irish knew themselves neglected by rulers and governing classes, and the Irish remember even to this day a speech by Prince Albert in which he said contemptuously that the Irish were entitled to no more sympathy than were the Poles. The Fenian movement too, born in Paris about 1855 of Irish agitators, and nursed in America, had grown strong and lusty, so when the Mayor of Dublin called a meeting on February 8, 1863, to arrange to put up a Prince Albert statue on College Green, a man named Sullivan made a proposal that the statue of Grattan should occupy the spot, saying that Dublin people

would hate the Prince's statue and hiss it as they passed.

Sullivan's motion was defeated, but he called a meeting of protest in the Rotunda, which was said to have been attended by 40,000 people. Now the protestor himself was regarded as a traitor by the majority of the Fenians, and when he began to speak the moiety of the audience which had got into the hall, among the leaders of whom was O'Donovan Rossa, went for him, and also for the O'Donoghue, M.P., who was chairman of the meeting. These two fled for their lives, hid for two hours in some private room and were rescued by the police. In the great hall the speaking had occupied only a few minutes, but for two hours a free fight raged, being probably much enjoyed by the combatants.

That was the end of the Prince's statue on the Green, and years later one was erected there to Grattan, the work being done by J. H. Foley. A statue was eventually erected to Albert on Leinster Lawn, which forms one side of Merrion Square and belongs to the Royal Dublin Society. It was protected by high railings, yet one Sunday night in 1872 an attempt was made to blow it up with dynamite.

The impression left upon the mind of the Queen was that the Irish had flouted and insulted the memory of her adored husband, and it was over thirty-six years before she showed any signs of forgiving the incident.

In 1866 the Queen sent to her eldest grandchild, William of Prussia, a silver statuette of his grand-

father, three feet high, representing him as a hero conquering sin.

There was probably a double reason for this, for the beloved first grandchild was showing an unamiable spirit. Sir Charles Hallé described him paradoxically as charming, but a devil. The little prince had entered the Queen's room just as Sir Charles was leaving it, and Victoria told him to salute her visitor. He refused, and she asked him what his mamma would say if she were told that her little boy was impolite. However, he would not move. The Queen insisted that he should obey, and the delightful eight-year-old boy, looking straight into her eyes, said—

“I will not!”

This was followed by a spanking, or as the musician put it, “a veritable struggle and a very painful one took place between grandmother and grandson. At last the child yielded and made a deep bow.”

There is another story, probably belonging to a somewhat earlier year, of how little William, being naughty at the luncheon-table, was sentenced to disappear beneath the table until the meal was over. Being at last allowed to return to dining-room society, he emerged—stark naked.

The fact that Queen Victoria, while repudiating all public activity, found energy to visit Netley Hospital and the Consumptive Hospital at Brompton early in her widowhood, these being places the foundation stones of which had been laid by the Prince; that she instituted the Albert medal as an award to those who saved life at sea; that for years her chief personal

interest was in planning and unveiling memorials; all these indicate the state of her mind. She had fallen in love with grief, and her only pleasure came from indulging it.

As the years passed the public grew tired of this insistence upon woe. It had wept with her at first and had been roused to a sympathetic, protective love for her. The journals had given the Prince such pæans of praise as a winding-sheet as were not later accorded to Victoria herself. This was a reaction of feeling in regard to the popular prejudice against the Prince which had troubled all his English life, and the reaction was caused by the suddenness of the catastrophe and a true appreciation of the Queen's grief; but it passed, and the public's opinion of the Prince Consort gradually veered round to what it had been, largely, at the time, because of the resentment felt at Victoria's attitude in showing always that the dead man was of more importance to her than her living subjects.

But Queen Victoria thought that that evanescent mood had come to stay, and that her people's first care should be that she should be left in peace with her sorrow. So for the first three or four years she saw no one but her children and usual attendants; she refused to go to London or to take up any Court functions—Albert had always hated London, and she too disliked it. She grew morbid and self-absorbed, and suffered keenly from self-consciousness on the very rare occasions when she did appear before strangers, generally to unveil a statue.

A ball or so, a concert or so, a drawing-room or so,

each with a princess as hostess, made the courtly season, and the tradesmen of London began to complain, the papers began to urge the Queen to come into view, and the people began to say, "Why have a queen at all?" Victoria paid no heed, for she had a large share of that firmness which the vulgar call obstinacy. She also possessed an absolute conviction that when she had chosen a course she *could not* be wrong, her decision, being hers, must be right. Therefore she refused all concessions and continued in her isolated position. She saw nothing of the change coming over the minds of men, of the republican feeling which was permeating the working classes under Palmerston's contempt for all schemes of political reform, of the hatred which was leavening Ireland against England because of the mixed policy of neglect and tyranny which obtained there. She only saw, when complaints were made, that her people were unjust and cruel to her personally, that republicanism was a sin against Divine Right, and that the Irish were very wicked people. Such warnings as the following, published by *The Times*, she regarded as pure extravagance—

"It may be that in time London may accustom itself to do without the Palace, but it is not desirable that we should attain that point of republican simplicity. . . . No reigning house can afford to confirm in their view those who suggest that the throne is only an antiquarian relic and royalty itself a ceremony, who think that the less that is seen and heard of a Court the better."

In 1864 she made the concession of allowing her birthday to be kept with the usual honours, she herself being at Balmoral. The next year she announced that she would hold two Courts, one for diplomatists and the second for such distinguished persons as she wished to invite. At once the hope arose that Buckingham Palace would again become inhabited and the Court recover from its state of suspended animation, but there was a tinge of doubt and bitterness mixed with the hope.

The first reception, that to the diplomatists, had an unfortunate introduction; the officials who arranged it had been four years out of practice, and had forgotten the formula. They sent out the invitations in something like this form—

“The Queen will graciously receive the Corps Diplomatique, *male* and *female*, at a Court to be held at Buckingham Palace,” etc.

Such a barbarism could not pass unnoticed, and the invited gentlemen sent their cards to their respective Courts, either as curiosities or to ask for guidance, so the blunder was known all over the world. Victoria must have felt much mortified, and though all those responsible tried to shift the fault on to each other’s shoulders, nobody dared to suggest that it was want of usage which occasioned the stupidity.

Two swallows do not make a summer, and these two receptions did not constitute a season; the grumbles and entreaties continued, and in September 1865 *Punch* published its renowned cartoon of “Hermione,” in which Pauline, in the form of Britannia, is shown

drawing back some curtains, thus revealing a statue of the Queen, crowned and wearing her robes of State.

“ ‘Tis time! Descend! Be stone no more!” says Pauline.

At last, when public comment became too loud and sustained, Victoria published a definite statement of her intentions, declaring that the idea that she was intending to resume her place as head of society could not be too explicitly contradicted; that she had other and higher duties to perform, which weighed unceasingly upon her, overwhelming her with work and anxiety; that she had laboured to discharge those duties till her health and strength had been impaired. “To call upon her to undergo, in addition, the fatigue of those mere State ceremonies which can be equally well performed by other members of her family, is to ask her to run the risk of entirely disabling herself for the discharge of those other duties which cannot be neglected without serious injury to the public interest.” The statement ended with her saying that she would do what she could—in the manner least trying to her health, strength and spirits to give support to society and encouragement to trade.

This pronouncement rather increased than allayed the dissatisfaction, for the popular mind could not understand that any work should make a recluse of the most public official in the whole country. The difference between the two standpoints lay in the fact that England regards the Sovereign as the Crown of the State, while Victoria regarded herself not as the

Crown alone but as the foundation, a somewhat contradictory view, which I doubt if even she could have explained.

What was this work in which she buried herself?

It was work which had gradually fallen into Albert-Victoria's hands through the Germanic ideals of the Prince Consort, who, under Stockmar's tuition, consistently mistook the functions of royalty in England. He demanded that nothing of any sort should be done in the Cabinet, or in Parliament, until it had received full consideration by the Queen; in actual fact he asked that the Constitution should become an absolute Monarchy, that no dispatches should be sent away until they had been studied by the Queen, which really meant by himself—and altered in agreement with her wishes. This applied not only to important matters but to everything, to the merest triviality of legislation; but foreign diplomacy was regarded as particularly the prerogative of the Sovereign—with a view to upholding Monarchy in Europe.

When the Prince died Victoria gathered all this work into her own hands, and at the same time felt acutely that it was no fit work for a woman, for she had no belief in the intellectual capacity of her sex. Thus, while she set herself to perform a perfectly unnecessary, useless and impossible task, she pitied herself with an intensity which was pathetic. Writing to Theodore Martin, she asked him to contradict the idea that it was the Queen's sorrow which kept her secluded. "It is her *overwhelming* work and her health which is greatly shaken by her sorrow, and the



QUEEN VICTORIA IN 1864  
After a painting by Winterhalter



totally overwhelming amount of work and responsibility—work which she feels really wears her out. Alice Helps is wonder-struck at the Queen's room, and if Mrs. Martin will look at it she can tell Mr. Martin what surrounds her. From the hour she gets out of bed until she gets into it again there is work, work, work, letter-boxes, questions, etc., which are dreadfully exhausting—and if she had not comparative rest and quiet in the evening she would most likely not be alive. Her brain is constantly overtaxed."

Mrs. Martin went to look at the royal workroom, and wrote of "the piles of dispatch-boxes, all of them full of work for her, and all requiring immediate attention; and this goes on from day to day. It is the Queen's great aim to follow the Prince's plan, which was to *sign nothing* until he had read and made notes upon what he signed. You may imagine how such conscientiousness swallows up the royal leisure."

Conscientiousness is admirable, when rightly used; in this case, however, though it justified itself to the Queen, it was exercised to the detriment of the country. Upon all these papers dealing with the government of the country the most expert political brains of whichever party was in power had been exercised, yet each question had, in every stage of its development, to be reduced to the comprehension of a single mind, and every movement of its passage had to be retarded while that mind was not only grappling with it, but demanding alterations. Had Victoria's intellect been equal to that of her most renowned Minister the

situation would still have been difficult; as it was it was often painful, leading to an intense royal dislike of some statesmen, and a system of unashamed flattery on the part of others which, while oiling the wheels of the machine, was unperceived by Victoria.

It does seem as if the poor Queen, in her desire to continue to rule England according to the ideals of the Prince Consort and Stockmar, had set herself an overwhelming task, to use her own word. But there was, entirely unknown to her general subjects, and for a long time to her Cabinet, an alleviation of the situation. From the beginning of her widowhood she had called upon some of those who held official posts in her household to help her in these political duties. The Hon. Charles Grey, who had been private secretary to Albert, remained the Queen's private secretary until his death in 1870. He and Sir Charles Phipps, the Keeper of the Privy Purse, were deputed by her to assist her personally in the matter of dispatches, and they had clerkly assistants to aid them. Mr., afterwards Sir Arthur, Helps, Clerk to the Privy Council, advised her in personal matters, and thus there were a number of people engaged in doing the actual work of which Victoria complained. An anonymous criticism of the Queen appeared in *The Quarterly Review* in April 1891, the authorship of which I have seen ascribed to such diverse people as Baron Stockmar's son and Lady Ponsonby—the first obviously impossible—which revealed much about this secret staff.

“The staff, never officially acknowledged in the

fulness of its functions, had to exercise the most complete self-effacement and became in effect an expansion of the Queen's personal power in action. The watchword of the lives of her private secretaries was devotion to the will of the Queen. The secret of the power they exercised was faithfully kept from the public, and will always be kept. These men gave their lives to her service, without demur or reserve, and it is as much to her honour as it is to theirs, that she inspired such complete devotion in men of such remarkable gifts."

Later General Ponsonby, Sir Thomas Biddulph, Sir Arthur Bigge and Sir Fleetwood Edwards became members of the advising staff. These men were required to belong to no party, to have no politics and to show in their political work no bias, and they loyally succeeded in conforming to these conditions. Beaconsfield once said he believed General Ponsonby to be a Whig, but could not tell what he really was, adding, "I can only say that I could not wish my case stated to the Queen better than her private secretary 'does it.'" Gladstone also paid the General a high tribute of the same kind.

These men, forming a sort of secret cabinet, read through all dispatches and digested all political questions, kept watch upon all matters of public importance, and had the history and analysis of events ready scheduled for Victoria's use should she call for it. Thus her position was not so bad as she in her self-commiseration thought it was, and she found plenty of time to write her numberless family letters,

keep in touch with a hundred and one schemes for perpetuating the Prince's memory, and carry on various literary labours of her own.

The first of the books which she caused to be published—in 1862—was a collection of her husband's speeches, Arthur Helps doing the actual preparation under her keen supervision. Then came the compilation of the volume entitled *Early Years of H.R.H. the Prince Consort*, in which Charles Grey helped her, the Queen sorting and choosing all the material. This work proved so congenial to her that she looked for more, and projected an important biography of the Prince. As Sir Charles Grey found it impossible again to combine his heavy secretarial duties with biographical work, she went for advice to Arthur Helps, a man of high literary attainment. He also being much occupied, suggested Theodore Martin as a likely man for the task, and under that gentleman's editorship the five huge volumes of the *Life* were written. Theodore Martin refused to take a penny for his work, doing it entirely as a labour of love, thereby receiving the friendship of the Queen and a knighthood. For this book Victoria chose all letters and documents and watched every page of its progress, allowing it to absorb much of her time. The first volume was not published until 1874, but the other four volumes followed quickly.

A fourth book, and in one way the most important of all, for it was much more widely read, and has long outlasted the others, was *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*, being a selection from

Victoria's diary written in her Balmoral home. The contents of this were carefully chosen by her Majesty, and Arthur Helps put it together. It is, or was in the last generation, too well known to need description; simply written, it is an account of daily life and excursions in Scotland, tremendously laudatory both of the scenery and the people, precise as to the hour and minute at which everything was done, and full of allusions to the Prince: "Albert was in perfect ecstacies . . . it delighted dear Albert. . . . Albert enjoyed it so much." Also as *Punch*—and other reviews—wickedly said, "the trait that seems to be the most prominent in her Majesty's book is the tea-tray." One paper solemnly declared that it was untrue that Sir Wilfred Lawson intended to write a diary of his temperance work and dedicate it to the Queen under the title "More (Tea) Leaves." The Royal party seems to have been a perpetual tea-party, for wherever they went or whatever happened the tea-kettle was always being boiled. At Balmoral it appears to have been all holiday, for work is never mentioned in the book, which was one that any simple-minded woman might have written, making no pretensions to style; but then, said Victoria, "How could Mr. Helps expect pains to be taken when she wrote late at night, suffering from headache and exhaustion, and in dreadful haste and not for publication?"

However, it was published, privately in 1867 and publicly the next year, realizing something over £30,000, which some paragraphist gravely asserted was given to the Prince of Wales, who on an inadequate

income was doing all the royal State work. Thus it will be seen that while the Queen was lamenting that her work for her country destroyed her health, she was also deeply engrossed in superintending four books, three of which appeared at the very time that she was excusing herself from her public duties.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUBJECTS IN REVOLT

“With a Court that is given to chilling formality,  
Limited Monarch in name and in deed;  
It rests with the people to show hospitality,  
Such as consorts with the national creed.”—*Anon.*

“She closed her palace—deputing the heir-apparent—to dwell in a beautiful castle she possessed in a secluded and romantic spot, retaining about her only a few faithful adherents. She chose as her constant attendant a trusty and faithful henchman named Ivan Roan, whose duty it was to watch over her, and accompany her in her long rambles amidst the wild but picturesque scenery which surrounded her mountain home.”—*Queen Tresoria and her People.* 1867.

FROM the first year of her widowhood Queen Victoria went to Scotland twice a year, and she gradually followed a definite annual routine. Christmas would be spent at Osborne, the visit there not concluding until well into January, and even on rare occasions until the end of February. When in later years she went abroad, April was the favourite month. In May the journey taken was to Balmoral, for a four weeks' visit, which generally ended about the twentieth of June. Some time in July the royal party went to Osborne, whence in August they travelled straight to Scotland, this autumn sojourn in the north varying from six weeks to three months, the longest stay there being even longer than that. Thus it would be some

time in November before Victoria returned to Windsor, and then, as soon as the fatal fourteenth of December was passed, the Court moved to Osborne for Christmas. During the whole twelve months the Queen would pass a few isolated days in her capital. Windsor received her during the intervals between Scotland and Osborne; it was not far from London, and yet only the most pressing family reasons could at first induce her to make the journey to town.

It had been regarded as a sacred duty that the Sovereign should always open Parliament in person. William IV was the first to fail to comply with it, but only in the last year of his reign; and he was admonished that his absence contravened constitutional principle.

Our Queen, however, resolutely refused to take this slight share in the work of the State, and thus she gave opportunity for further criticism, until when 1866 dawned she found herself face to face with a difficulty. Though she flouted Parliament she could not do without its help, and this year she must ask it not only for a dowry for Princess Helena, but for an income for Prince Alfred, who was coming of age. So, feeling it necessary to do something popular, she consented to appear at the February ceremony.

It was a terrible trial to her; she had lived in seclusion so long that she did not know how to bring herself to face a multitude, and as she was doing it for her own ends and not from a sense of duty or a love for her people, she did it grudgingly, determined that if the public wanted to see her they should see her not

as the royal head of the State, but as one who sorrowed unceasingly.

Long before two, the hour of opening, the throne-room was filled with a gorgeous crowd. Said Moncure D. Conway, in his *Autobiography*: "I believe every gem, necklace, coronet, robe and decoration belonging to the nobility was worn that day; the fullest of Court dress, and the scene was billowy with necks and shoulders." When silver trumpets sounded and a cannon thundered the whole assembly rose as though galvanized. Then came an awkward pause, for nothing happened, and with cheerful grins every one sat down again.

On the throne before that great company were spread the royal robes, with the crown near by, and every one wondered. The Queen used the dress carriage, not the state coach, and had it drawn up at the peers' door, not at the royal entrance, and when she went into the throne-room it was in dead silence, without the usual fanfare of trumpets. Deep reverences were made, but murmurs of disappointment accompanied them. The Queen seated herself on the throne, her daughters drawing the state robe about her. To quote again from Moncure Conway—

"Save for some slight badge and the Koh-i-Noor on her forehead, she was still in sombre raiment. She was the only homely woman in the House, and this was accentuated by contrast with the beautiful and superbly costumed Princess of Wales. Instead of her reading the address to Parliament, it was read by the Chancellor. Through it she sat as if carved on the

throne; when it was finished she rose, bowed slightly, kissed the Princess of Wales and disappeared through the back door. . . . This withdrawal from her functions impressed me as a danger. There was a vigorous republican agitation going on in England, and it was frequently said that the practical extinction of the Court had demonstrated the uselessness of the throne. I remember being at a dinner of the Urban Club, St. John's Gate, of which I was a member, when young Mr. Babington, a kinsman of Lord Macaulay, refused to rise to the toast to the Queen, avowing, when his conduct was questioned, his republican opposition to monarchy. There was a noisy discussion, but a goodly number defended Babington's right so to express his opinion. It became plain to me that the Queen was not popular."

Having once made a public progression through the streets, her Majesty opened Parliament again next year, with the same absence of state, though her gown was more regal in that it was trimmed with ermine, and she wore a Marie Stuart cap. Laments were uttered that her sweet, musical voice was no longer heard in England's Parliament, and instead of declaring themselves amply satisfied, the papers pleaded that, having done so much, she should go further and take up other neglected royal duties.

"Our royal personages, when they travel abroad, are received with royal honours. It seems unfit that there should be so little return as there has been in England of late for the hospitalities which have in so many countries been extended to our own princes.

Hotels, however comfortable, are not palaces, and it is unseemly that the entertaining of strangers should ever be done in England by simply paying the bill. In private life the thing would be impossible." So said *The Queen* newspaper.

The trouble hinted at here had been gathering force for some time, and arose from the fact that Victoria refused to entertain at her home any but personal friends. When Prince Humbert of Italy came to England he was put up at his ambassador's, was not invited to Court, was shown over Windsor Castle like an ordinary visitor, and had to go to an inn there to get food. Said a sneering journalist, "It is such delicate courtesies as these on the part of our Court that make the name of England so deeply respected and beloved throughout the Continent."

The Queen of Holland came to England in September 1867, was received at Woolwich by Customs House officials, and on arrival in London was driven to Claridge's Hotel, whence she went to Hatfield to become the guest of the Marquis of Salisbury. However, the matter which had raised the question of England's loss of dignity in its treatment of friendly foreign sovereigns was that not only had her Majesty's Ministry refused to take any part in the Great French Exhibition in deference to the Queen's and Palmerston's known dislike and distrust of Louis Napoleon, but that Victoria refused to entertain any of the royal visitors to that great gathering. The Emperor of Russia, the Sultan of Turkey, the Khedive of Egypt and other crowned heads were to be within a few hours'

journey of London, but no invitations were sent to any one to visit us.

"We might, so far as this mighty fellowship of the nations is concerned, as well be dead. . . . There is dust on the curtains and rust on the hinges of the doors. . . . The stupor is forced upon us. We are all ready to rebel against the fate that holds us down. And unless a relaxation of the bondage is speedily granted, our national dissatisfaction will find a voice," complained the leader-writer in *The Sunday Times*, and all the papers voiced the popular anger.

The Khedive sent a message that he would like to visit England, which gave the Queen a shock at the idea that she should entertain him, though both Buckingham Palace and St. James's Palace stood empty from one end of the year to the other. The perplexed Ministers could only think of Claridge's Hotel; there were remonstrances and questions in the House, and then Lord Dudley "interposed to protect the nation from the reproach which would have been cast upon it," by placing his mansion in Park Lane at the disposal of the Viceroy, and the Cabinet were only too glad to accept his offer.

The Sultan openly waited an invitation from the English Court, and no one knew what to do. No one really wanted him, for it was the time of the Cretan rebellion, which was being put down with the usual Turkish barbarities. However, the Ministers thought it a matter of diplomacy to let him come, and urged upon Victoria that it was extremely necessary that she should extend and confirm her influence in the

East, the cleverest argument that they could have used.

So she relented and allowed the Sultan, whom Gladstone later called the greatest murderer in Europe, to be received at Buckingham Palace, she herself remaining at Windsor. Her friendly instincts were satisfied by inviting the Khedive to dine and sleep at Windsor one night, by inviting the Sultan to lunch one day, and holding a grand review of battleships in the latter's honour. It had been suggested that Abdul Aziz should be decorated with the Order of India, but the proud monarch scorned anything less than the Garter, and he was invested with it during the review. It was a stormy day, the ships at Spithead pitching bows under when at anchor. On the yacht *Osborne* the Sultan steamed for two miles between battleships—three lines of vessels on either side of him—and at the end he joined the Queen on the *Victoria and Albert*. There the ceremony took place, being done “in grand style by the Queen herself,” on the quarter deck, in the midst of a howling storm and the roaring of cannon. As it was also done in a hurry there was no ribbon ready, so Victoria took the Prince of Hesse’s ribbon, intending it should be changed for a new one afterwards, but the Sultan refused to give it up, saying he would only wear the actual ribbon given him by the Queen.

The people of England, in their delight at feeling themselves once more in touch with the great world of Europe, went wild over the Sultan, the last monarch on the continent to deserve their ebullience;

yet he went away dissatisfied with the attention shown him.

In May 1867, the Queen went in semi-state to lay the foundation-stone of the Albert Hall, a wooden building equal in size to the intended hall having been put up and roofed in canvas. The velvet and gold canopy and throne which should have been used at the 1862 exhibition were transferred there, and Victoria, in deepest mourning, widow's bonnet and *crêpe* mantle, occupied its gorgeousness, her mind in tune with her clothing. But she was not always so sad, and we read of her three months later starting for Balmoral, wearing a bonnet of so frivolous a material as tulle, and looking in good spirits and excellent health.

When she could get away from the centre of affairs and dispense with state without qualms of conscience she was happy; but when she returned to England "all her depression was renewed." Theodore Martin had been living at Osborne all that summer, engaged on the *Life* of the Prince, and to him Victoria wrote of Scotland—

"Beloved country! The Queen's whole heart yearns to it more and more, and it will be a sad day when she leaves it again." After her return, in another letter to him, she spoke of Windsor as the "gloomiest, saddest of places," the change to a cathedral church with its bells and clergy, to a garrison town and a Court she described as "dreadful"; saying that she missed "the atmosphere of loving affection and the hearty attachment of the people."

The very sentinel under her window she thought an annoyance.<sup>1</sup>

From which series of complaints it is easy to see that neither Windsor nor its people was at fault, but the Queen's most unfortunate state of mind. Clinging firmly to royalty, she yet despised all its ways, and punished her innocent subjects by lauding the simple, homely life of a country lady which she loved, as though they were the cause of her having occasionally to take her real position as a queen. She was quite an old woman before her mind grew healthier and she began to realize the real character of her English subjects, before she began to lose the blighting Germanic impressions about them almost indelibly pressed upon her by Prince Albert. That the English people resented her poor opinion and avoidance of them was only to be expected, but Victoria regarded their resentment as only a new proof of their unworthiness and inferiority to her Scotch peasants.

During the next few dark years English newspapers recurred constantly to the popular desire for the Queen's favour, for her presence, for her recognition of the people's loyalty; some, more impatient, openly declared that the country had no use for such a queen, that it was wrong to spend so much money for nothing. "Which is it to be?" was the question under a double cartoon; one side showing Victoria on her throne in the midst of animated people, some at work and others at play, and on the opposite page was the throne covered solely with state robes, and people vainly seeking work,

<sup>1</sup> *Victoria as I Knew Her.* By Sir Theodore Martin.

or in a state of exhaustion. All this has been ignored by the mass of courtly biographers who have written "lives" of Victoria, who sing a prolonged song of praise, and pretend that the nation honoured her long seclusion as a beautiful ideal of devotion. But the truth is to be found in the daily papers of the period, and in the speeches both of members of Parliament and of leaders of revolution.

Official attempts were made in July 1867 to explain her Majesty's continued absence from all public festivities on the score of health, saying that agitation, over-worry or much talking in the evening would be followed by restless nights and distressing sick headaches : "It is right to be known that her Majesty, with the greatest desire to fulfil all those duties which appertain to her dignity or her hospitality, is occasionally prevented from performing them by bodily suffering of a character most difficult to be borne." A sentence which, from its style, was obviously written by Victoria herself.

This did not do much good, probably because the notice protested too much, for no one believed that Victoria was anxious to fulfil the duties in question. But there can be no doubt that she did suffer as described through nervousness, produced, not by over-excitement in itself, but by the constant seclusion which gave rise to a feeling of excitement when, on rare occasions, she did surround herself with people.

She had in March of this year spent two days at Buckingham Palace, on one of which she had driven round Trafalgar Square to see the new lions, and had

held a Court in the afternoon; on the second she had gone to the studios of Henry Weekes and Patrick M'Dowell to see the groups being executed for the Albert Memorial. At the end of the month she was in London again for twenty-four hours, and held the first drawing-room of her widowhood. . . . Thus she had at least made an attempt to meet the wishes of her subjects. In the following year she held another drawing-room, this time of a more dignified character, as the invitations were for Buckingham Palace and not for St. James's. Of this function it was told that her Majesty's sense of decorum was shocked by the dress of one lady, and that she instructed her chamberlain to inform that guest that she was not to appear again at the palace in so low a dress. In July, too, she invited six hundred guests to a breakfast in the garden of Buckingham Palace, at which she was said to look remarkably well and to enjoy the party.

There was a curious controversy, born of lack of usage, as to what garments were suitable for a breakfast held at 4.30 p.m.—we now call them tea-parties—and it ended in a command for morning trousers and evening coats, perhaps an attempt to accentuate the hour as between morning and night. One facetious writer declared that the Lord Chancellor had been reduced to studying *Enquire Within upon Everything* for guidance.

In spite of these rare appearances, so gladly acknowledged by the Press, Victoria had no intention of making a habit of hospitality, and discontent was by no means stamped out; her injudicious favouritism of

a Scotch servant also gave it new life, while altering its character in a disagreeable way.

John Brown was the son of a humble farmer at Craithie, was gaunt in appearance, rough in manner, and spoke broad Doric. He had been gillie, or outdoor boy, to Prince Albert at Balmoral in 1849, and was taken on as permanent servant three years later. After her widowhood Victoria gave up riding for a time, and then, to relieve monotony, used a pony, John Brown being appointed to walk at its head. From that time he was her Majesty's shadow; maybe because, in her entourage trained to meek obedience and quiet subservience, this uncouth and assertive Scotchman provided a certain piquancy to her dulness. She went nowhere without him, he stood behind her chair at table, drove on the box of her carriage, went abroad with her, and was by her side on every journey, short or long. He became a power in the palace, and was a far more important person than Sir John Cowell, the Master of the Household.

In 1866 the Queen gave John Brown the title of Esquire, and *Punch* at once did his new position honour by including his name in an especial Court Circular—

“Balmoral. Tuesday. Mr. John Brown walked on the Slopes. He frequently partook of a haggis. In the evening Mr. John Brown was pleased to listen to the bagpipes. Mr. John Brown retired early.”

In the previous year when Victoria wrote to her daughter Alice that she should bring Brown with her on her visit to Germany, Alice replied, “How it will

amuse and please me to show the excellent Scotchman our home. It is a pleasure to hear of such devotion and attention to you as Brown's is, and indeed you are so kind to him, that his whole happiness must consist in serving so good a mistress."

Living at such a distance, Princess Alice could afford to write in this way; but had she lived under the Scotchman's shadow, as some of her sisters and brothers did, she might have been less cordial. John Brown was a republican in manners, uttering his opinions loudly before all, his royal mistress included, and in him she did not resent this. His advice was asked on all questions, whether family, private or public, and many a strong word has been smothered in a royal throat in exasperation thereat. As time went on Brown became more and more necessary to the Queen, and more and more overbearing to those with whom he came in contact. But his mistress showered favours on him and delighted to do him honour. Among one of his privileges was the sole right of fishing in the Dee, at a spot close to the Castle of Balmoral.

One morning when he was busy with the salmon, a servant went to him, saying—

"Mr. Brown, her Majesty wishes you to go to her."

"Weel, just tell her Majesty that A canna come; Ah'm juist hooking a feesh."

A little later the servant went again; the Queen wanted to see him at once.

"Weel, ye must tell her Majesty that A've juist hooked the saumun, and A canna come the noo."

When Adelaide was queen she kept a little frigate on Virginia Water for family use, and Victoria conceived the idea of replacing it with something more useful and up to date. She, of course, consulted Brown, who asked her what was the good of fooling away so much money. Later her Majesty, still playing with the idea, suggested a steam launch, but her servant snubbed her with the same retort. At last, through some influence, the Admiralty provided a barge, at the public cost of £700, which gave Victoria a double pleasure. John Brown, however, still scowled, until told that the Admiralty had paid for it, whereupon he graciously ejaculated—

“Weel, if they like to fule awa’ their money, o’ course they can.”

It is said that the barge was never used by the Prince and Princess of Wales, as they would have had to ask permission of the Queen, which would have been tantamount to asking it of John Brown.

Another perfectly authentic story, told by several people and among them by Neele, the superintendent of the Queen’s train, who was on the platform at the time, is dated 1878. The Queen received a telegram on her way north, before reaching Perth, where breakfast was arranged for her in the usual waiting-room. From this telegram she learned that Princess Helena’s week-old son was dead. As soon as the train drew up on the Perth platform, Brown swung himself off, and approaching the crowd of magnates who were waiting to receive her Majesty, cried in loud Doric—

"No cheering! no cheering! Christian's babby's dead!"

Brown is also credited with telling the Queen on more than one occasion that she did not know her own mind for two minutes together, a freedom which would have been allowed to no one else on earth.

By 1867 John Brown's name was in every mouth, and such stories as the above were titbits of gossip, eagerly repeated. It was all so contrary to the Englishman's conception of his Queen, proud to a fault, coldly indifferent, punctilious in ceremony, that it gradually rose to a sensation, and the worser sort did not scruple to utter coarse jokes. This was commented upon by *The Sunday Times*, a paper at that period most annoying to high persons for its outspokenness. Noting the general discontent with royalty, in a leader it continued—

"This discontent is already making itself known by methods which we both disapprove and deplore. We have but little patience with sinister mendacity and still less with disgusting scandal. But the mendacity is not without meaning—the scandal is not without significance. Almost every kind of unpleasant rumour is in circulation. Nobody believes the rumours, which yet find a ready currency. The explanation of this state of affairs is too easy to find. Unpleasant lies are invented and repeated and handed from mouth to mouth, because there is a strong inducement of dissatisfaction which is too earnest for silence and yet too timid for utterance. We abhor the trick, we deprecate and denounce it."

A weekly illustrated paper, named *The Tomahawk*, published a cartoon that August, entitled, "The Mystery of the Season," showing John Brown in Highland clothes, pipe in hand, leaning on the side of the throne chair, gazing down upon it thoughtfully, while the British lion stares up at him, waiting, like an expectant dog, for his word.

Of Brown at this period the Queen herself wrote : "His attention, care and faithfulness cannot be exceeded; and the state of my health, which of late years has been sorely tried and weakened, renders such qualifications most valuable, and indeed most needful, in a constant attendant upon all occasions. He has most deservedly been promoted to be an upper servant, and my permanent personal attendant. He has all the independence and elevated feelings peculiar to the Highland race, and is singularly straightforward, simple-minded, kind-hearted and disinterested; always ready to oblige; and of a discretion rarely to be met with."

The only pity was that the Queen was herself so indiscreet in allowing a mere serving-man, or indeed any one, such liberty of speech as that claimed by John Brown—a liberty far exceeding that which she allowed to her own children; her indiscretion was also shown in making her favouritism so publicly known among her English subjects, who felt that the superiority of the Highland character was too much insisted upon.

From this time John Brown's name constantly appeared in print in a way flattering neither to him nor to her Majesty, for his influence increased as the years

passed. He was known as one who was feared, not liked by his equals; one who could not be opposed with impunity, who was strongly disliked by the Queen's children—the Princess Royal being the only one who dared to say openly to her mother what she thought about him and his position—who knew many secrets, and who was charged occasionally by the Queen with delicate and secret missions.

In June 1870 *The Tomahawk* published another cartoon of him, called "The Vacant Chair," showing John Brown about to seat himself upon the Prince Consort's empty throne. Before July had elapsed the paper had ceased to exist, and Matt Morgan, its editor, had received a large bribe to exercise his talents on the other side of the Atlantic.

That the Queen's family and relatives occasionally joined in the remonstrance offered her concerning her avoidance of her subjects is shown by the last words uttered about her by King Leopold—

"Pauvre Victoria ! ne la tormentez."

## CHAPTER VIII

### TWO PRIME MINISTERS

"You forget, my dearest love, that I am the Sovereign, and that business can stop and wait for nothing. Parliament is sitting, and something occurs almost every day for which I may be required, and it is quite impossible for me to be absent from London, therefore two or three days is already a long time to be absent."—*Queen Victoria's Letter to Prince Albert.* 1840.

"We know we say how very good our Queen is,  
And what a manager and what a mother !  
But though all this so very plainly seen is,  
We cannot quite our discontentment smother.  
Her virtues we admire, but what we mean is,  
Of two moves she should choose the one or t'other ;  
The one is—coming out amongst the nation,  
The other—going in for abdication."

*Contemporary verse.* 1868.

OF the men who held the exalted post of Prime Minister during the last forty years of Queen Victoria's reign, the two most notable were Gladstone and Disraeli. They were in almost every way in extreme opposition to each other, and they had a profound dislike for each other. Gladstone's dislike was downright and caustic, and Disraeli's sarcastic and suave. Gladstone had intellectual depth, Disraeli was superficial and brilliant; the one was devoted to ruling an improved England, the other to wielding Imperial power; the first found his greatest pleasure in living with the old Greek writers, notably Homer, the other

in writing graceful and satirical novels. Their points of agreement belonged purely to their external life. They were both faithful lovers and both won the adoration of their wives. Mrs. Gladstone, once known as "the beautiful Catherine Glynn," was in her age once heard at a royal concert discoursing upon her married happiness, and concluded with the remark, "But perhaps, my dear, you don't know what it is to have an affectionate husband!" She also once spoke of her husband as "surrounded with a halo of humility." But a beautiful story is that of a clergyman calling to see Gladstone, and being entertained by Mrs. Gladstone until her husband, who was writing upstairs, was disengaged. The visitor lamented the terrible state of affairs in Ireland, but added consolingly—

"There is One above who will set all right."

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Gladstone; "he'll be down directly!"

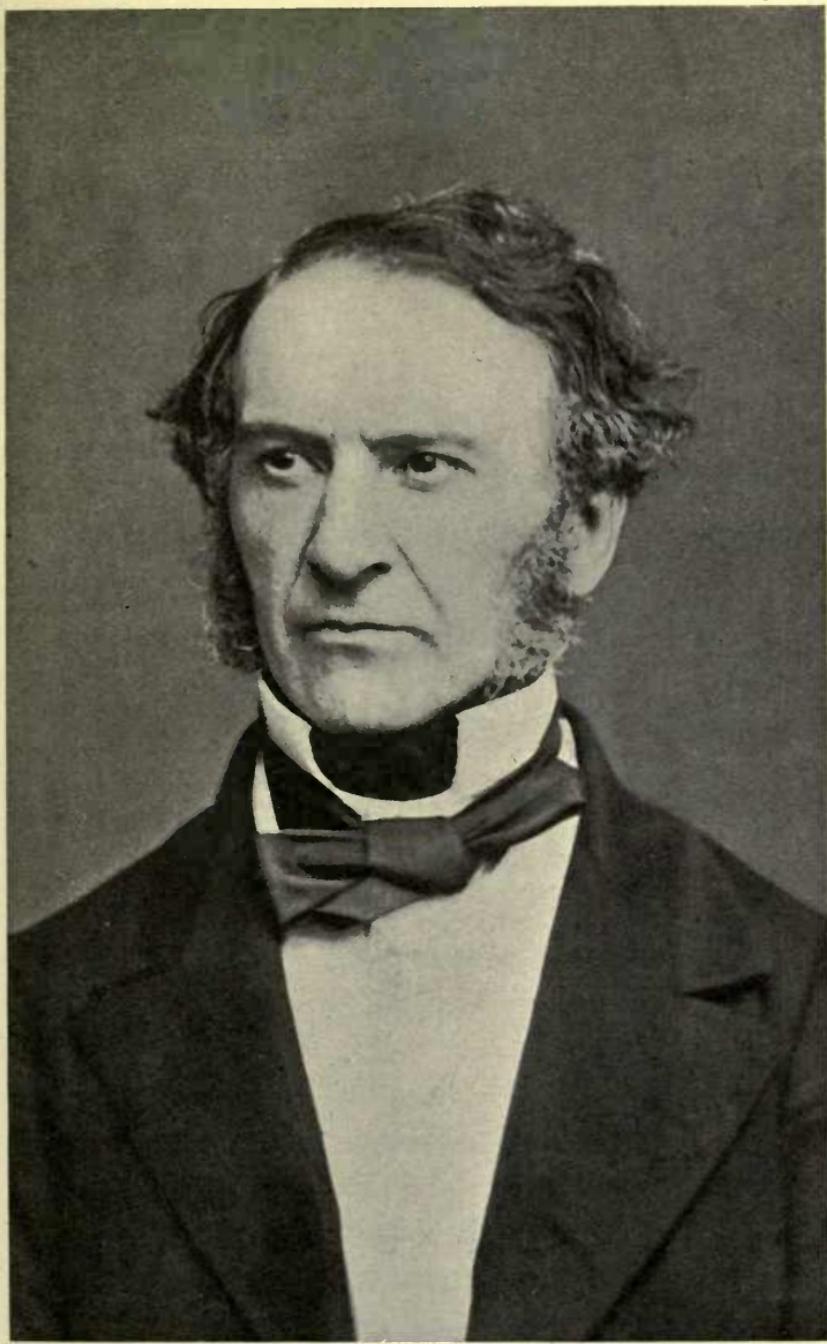
Disraeli married Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, who was the widow of a friend, and fifteen years older than himself. He would tell her in joke that he had married her for money, but she would only smile and say, "But if you had to do it again you would do it for love"; to which he would agree. She called him, as many other people did, "Dizzy," and he spoke of her as Mary Anne. It was a case in which the quality of protectiveness was exercised by the wife, for Mrs. Disraeli stood ever between her husband and trouble, and counted herself as nothing. She was once driving to the House with him, when her hand

got crushed in the carriage door, but she bore the pain silently, smilingly, for fear knowledge of the accident should distract his mind from the important speech he was about to make. She was more discriminating than Mrs. Gladstone, perhaps because she had a strong sense of humour, and she once said to a friend, "Dizzy has the most wonderful moral courage in the world, but no physical courage. When he has a shower-bath, I always have to pull the string."

Certainly in their home lives both the Gladstones and the Disraelis came well up to the Queen's ideal of perfection. Gladstone once, staying at Windsor, was talking to a colleague on serious political questions, when a slight noise was heard through an open door, much to the horror of the colleague.

"Never mind," said Gladstone; "it is only my wife. For forty years she has heard me discuss matters of State, but never once has anything come back to me."

Gladstone had come naturally to a parliamentary life, but Disraeli, hampered by his race and comparative poverty, had had to fight for it from the beginning. It is said that when he saw the first caricature of himself he jumped for joy, declaring that now his career was made. As a boy of fourteen he had been christianized, but he never really changed his religious beliefs, and for that reason could fight equally well on any side of Christian dispute. Yet he had once said, "You will see many things, but there are two which you will never *not* see me—a Jew and a Radical."



W. E. GLADSTONE



When Darwinism was first discussed he thought it politic to condemn it in a speech at Oxford.

“What is the question?” he asked. “It is now placed before society with, I might say, a glib assurance which to me is astonishing—the question is, is man an ape or an angel? (A laugh.) Now, I am on the side of the angels. (Cheers.)” This saying has become a “familiar quotation”; *Punch* fastened on it thus—

“On the side of the angels, my Dizzy? ah, then,  
How happy the angels should be!  
The ally whom they least could have looked for of men,  
In their army enlisted to see!”

Of the two men politically no one can doubt which Victoria preferred. The Prince Consort had once said of the Liberal, “Mr. Gladstone is a very clever man, and as he was educated at Oxford, he is able to believe anything he chooses.”<sup>1</sup> And, with her subservient regard for the lightest word of the Prince, the Queen accepted this libel upon an honest statesman. Gladstone was also too subtle and intellectual for her, she *could* not understand him, always feeling irritated at the end of an interview, probably for the same reason that a Liberal once gave for his dislike of the Minister, “Oh, he is always so damnably right.”

Gladstone regarded Victoria with the deepest loyalty and respect, both personally and because he felt the Crown to be sacred; he accepted to their fulness the assertions that she studied every question

<sup>1</sup> *Notes from a Diary*. By the Right Hon. Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff.

put before the country, and would go into details in explanation of his views, which she could not follow; and once she said petulantly after he was gone, "He talks to me as though I were a public meeting."

Disraeli, on the contrary, spoke a little on politics, told her some amusing stories, discussed intricate German relationships and German art, found occasion to make her laugh and to impress her with her high importance. He had no scruples either about the use of flattery. "First of all remember," he said to a colleague who was going out to Baden with the Queen, "that she is a woman!" This and his charming manner give the secret of his ascendancy over Victoria; she was what we now call a mid-Victorian woman, and her Conservative adviser realized it and treated her with the chivalrous air and the banalities which were then regarded as the correct thing for the "inferior sex." So Disraeli's gaiety delighted her, his deference soothed her wounded self-respect, and his flattery confirmed her belief that all she did was right. She took him into her confidence and gave him a definite part in her life, and he was nearly at the height of his ambition; not quite, for there was one little thing still to achieve.

Gladstone's deep respect and sincere loyalty were to her but the dues of her position; that he did not accompany them with an equally deep interest in the small things of her life was an offence, and it would have utterly surprised him to know that she said of him that he showed "little interest" and was "very

helpless" in her personal affairs. She is not the only one who has preferred as a friend one who could sympathize with her own point of view rather than one who was absorbed in her matters of business.

This power for sympathy was the secret of Victoria's friendship for Dr. Norman Macleod. In her diary, under date June 17, 1866, when she was indignant at the discontent of her English people, she wrote of the clergyman—

"He was so amiable and full of sympathy; he also suffers much from constant work and worry and must go abroad for relaxation. Told him how much I required it and that I came here for it, and had had a hard fight for it. He said he quite felt this, and entreated me—'as you work for us'—always to insist upon coming here."

There have been many theories for Victoria's dislike of Gladstone, but they all resolve themselves into incompatibility of manner and outlook, and a dislike for his politics. This double dislike she never hid, often giving it public expression, and at his death many stories were revived about actual personal discourtesies offered, such as keeping him waiting hours when he was summoned for an audience, while she went out for a drive or otherwise followed her usual routine, and refusing to speak to him if she met him anywhere. That Gladstone never allowed this to influence his policy angered her the more, and he, speaking in his age of their strained relations, said that from his first entrance to Windsor to his last there had been occasions when he had had to harden

his heart to a flint, for his actions had always been "sole"; that is to say, he had been working for a principle and had had to resist all the Queen's efforts to shake him from it.

She loved the brave show, the splendid outside fabric, the imperialistic ideas which characterized Disraeli, and had little appreciation of the solid building work which opposed Gladstone to him. It was enough that the former wanted to extend her empire. Gladstone had no interest in that; he had his mind upon the people, and saw that if a revolution was to be avoided the ills of Ireland must be cured, not accentuated by suppression; that if the Queen was to be maintained firmly upon her throne the English must be given the franchise reform that they demanded. Victoria, obsessed by her conviction of divine right, could not see these things at all.

So it was very much to her annoyance that in March 1866, when Prussia was getting ready for its swoop on Austria, she saw Gladstone bring in a Reform Bill. She wanted all her attention for continental happenings, and when she realized that her ministers intended to make this Bill the great measure of the session, and also that it would be a very contentious measure, she declared that it could not possibly be regarded as of sufficient importance to be allowed to upset the Government. She plainly told Lord John Russell that, whatever happened to his Franchise Bill, she would allow no change in the Ministry until the Austro-Prussian war was settled. In return her Cabinet begged her to stay at Windsor through May

while the debates were progressing, that she might be at hand if a crisis arose.

Her answer was that she intended to go to Balmoral as usual, and she expected the Government to allow no crisis to occur.

So while the House was in the midst of an energetic struggle, Victoria left England to follow her pleasant but mild occupations in the Highlands : driving, riding, sketching, visiting hallowed spots, and hearing sympathetic words from Dr. Macleod. But her command could not control the conflict of six hundred men, and in the middle of June the Government was defeated by eleven votes, causing a tremendous scene of ebullient joy among the Tories.

Victoria was extremely "provoked," and said she was taken entirely by surprise. Had she been—what it is so often claimed that she was—a truly constitutional sovereign, no surprise could have fallen upon her; it was her unconscious tendency to absolute monarchy which had made her believe that it was only necessary for her to speak to be obeyed. Lord John Russell was then very old, and felt that he had done his last public work; the journey to Balmoral was too much for him to contemplate, so he sent his resignation by messenger, which also displeased the Queen.

While she was in Scotland monster Reform meetings were held in all large towns, and yet she wrote back to Russell that the state of Europe was dangerous, the country was apathetic about reform, and it was inconsistent with the duty that ministers owed herself and the country to abandon their posts on what

was, after all, only a matter of detail. She desired them to reconsider their decision. The Cabinet met to do as she wished, but found that the only plan was resignation. Victoria returned to Windsor nine days after the ministerial defeat, and it was another nine days before Lord Derby was sent for and accepted office, with Disraeli as his foremost man. The people of London rose in turbulence at the death of Reform, and a great crowd surrounded Gladstone's house one day when he was not there. Fearing a riot, the police begged Mrs. Gladstone to appear for one minute on the balcony to satisfy them, and then the people dispersed.

It is curious in this struggle between Queen and Parliament, and in later ones, to contrast Victoria's action in leaving the country without a Government for eighteen days, and going to Balmoral for a month when a great crisis was expected, with her youthful sentiments which head this chapter.

It was in July this year that a five days' battle took place in Hyde Park between the police and an army of roughs, who took advantage of the Reform agitation to do as they pleased; and then were broken down those Hyde Park railings about which so much has been heard of late years.

The whole world seemed awry, for in addition to wars abroad and rows at home Ireland was being filled with money, pikeheads and Irish-Americans to fight England, and the Habeas Corpus Act had to be suspended. It was done in somewhat peculiar circumstances, there being great anxiety to conclude

the matter before the end of the week. The Queen was at Osborne, and to her on the Saturday a telegram was sent for her assent. The members remained in the House until midnight, and then, as the answer had not arrived, dispersed. At 12.30—that is, on Sunday morning—a messenger came with the assent, and the House was convoked, and though not fifty men were present the new law was promulgated, in spite of the law against Sunday legislation.

Disraeli had done his utmost to turn Russell's Government out on Reform, and had succeeded; he himself, finding the “apathetic” public too eager and vociferous to let him drop that measure, determined to “dish the Whigs” and bring in a Reform Bill of his own. He was afraid, though, that the Opposition would retaliate in kind, so, with the Queen's consent, tried to arrange that the fate of his Government should not be allowed to depend on his bill. It was a cry of “Heads I win, tails you lose!” which did not please the Liberals. He had once said of Peel that he had found the Whigs bathing and had walked away with their clothes; in this case Disraeli had helped the Liberals to undress for the plunge and had then walked off with their garments.

He relied upon the “Adullamites,” so called because they were Liberals who dissented from Gladstone's bill, and whom Bright likened to the enemies of Saul who hid with David in the Cave of Adullam. These, however, instead of joining Disraeli, ran away shivering when he said “Reform,” upon which Gladstone uttered an eleventh commandment: “Thou shalt not

commit Adullamy." When the new bill, torn to pieces, reversed, its black made white and its white black, was at last passed, Lowe, the chief of the Adullamites, piously made the best of events by saying of the new voters, "We must now educate our masters."

As to Fenianism, it is too long a tale. The Fenians thought to capture Chester Castle, they rescued prisoners in Manchester, and unintentionally killed a policeman, which led to the hanging of three men who were by no means proved to have been the assassins; in dastard callousness they blew up a part of Clerkenwell Prison, killing many innocent people; and they threatened to kidnap the Queen, an idea which tickled her Majesty wonderfully, who declared, laughing, that they would find her a very troublesome prisoner. But every one felt that she was in real danger, and on her return from Balmoral that autumn her advisers ordered a Scotch regiment to accompany, under arms, the royal train from Ballater to Carlisle, a regiment of footguards being sent to the latter place to go with the train to Windsor. However, the Queen would have none of it; she saw wisely that such a course would mean visible public division between herself and her people, so she resolutely refused to sanction the arrangement, saying that she felt the fullest confidence in her people.

It had often been urged that the Queen or the Prince of Wales should have a house in Ireland, but unfortunately this was never brought about, though at this time a report spread through the sister isle that the Prince and Princess intended to spend a portion

of each year there, and that her Majesty would go to Killarney in 1867. It was not, however, till April 1868 that Albert Edward and Alexandra paid the promised visit, and then the Irish people, jealous, passionate and generous, met them with cheers, presented the Princess with two white doves—which later found a home at Sandringham—and themselves kept the streets of Dublin free from confusion, no troops appearing at all; which is a tribute, not only to the Irish, but to the courage of the royalties.

Prince Arthur, who went there a year later, did not fare quite so well. He was young and injudicious, and identified himself far too much with the Orange faction, so that enthusiasm died. After going to Dublin, Killarney and Belfast he went on to Londonderry, and the night of his arrival a sharp collision took place between the triumphing Protestants and the embittered Roman Catholics, in which two men were killed. This led to an unforgettable incident at Cork. In 1868 Prince Alfred had made a tour in Australia, which almost ended tragically, for while at a public breakfast at Port Jackson he was shot in the back by a Fenian named O'Farrell. The ball entered near the spine and ran round the body without touching any vital part. The Prince recovered; O'Farrell it was who died—by hanging. The Queen was in deep distress, weeping at any mention of it, and so she feared greatly while her younger son was in Ireland.

At Cork two prisoners, Costello and Colonel Warren, having been released, were given a dinner

before starting for America by the mayor of the town, a man named O'Sullivan, who made a long speech, in many respects temperate, but at the end alluding to the presence of the young prince in their land; and then, reverting to the Fenians, he declared that O'Farrell, who had shot the Duke of Edinburgh, was a noble and patriotic man.

Prince Arthur returned quite safely to England, but Victoria was more than ever embittered against Ireland, and a great depression fell upon her for herself and her family, in no way relieved by the demand in Parliament that the Mayor of Cork should be suspended from his functions; he, however, solved the difficulty by resigning.

Disraeli became Prime Minister in the spring of 1868. He was sixty-four years old, and had worked for this position all his life against tremendous odds, but he had conquered all; and now, having attained, he quickly secured a position of confidential trust given to no other man. Moncure Conway said of him: there is "something so picturesque in a Jewish lad bringing the royal family and the aristocracy to his feet. He has done it, too, in the wise and gentle ways of Solomon, by unbroken civility and friendliness."

So "the solitary gladiator," as *Punch* once called him, ended at last his long, lonely struggle and became first man in England. There was much chaff and the recrudescence of many stories, one of which lived longer than himself. In 1862 he had made a speech in which he said that he "observed that there was a

great deficiency in our national character, and which, if neglected, might lead to the impairing not only of our social happiness, but even the sources of our public wealth; and that was a deficiency of culture. But he was not satisfied in detecting, he resolved to supply it." Ever afterwards Dizzy's intention to educate the nation was a subject for joking.

His great position was his but for a short time, his Ministry being defeated over the second serious measure brought forward—Gladstone's Irish Church Bill. Sydney Smith had thus described the condition of the State Church in Ireland at the time—

"On an Irish Sabbath the bell of a neat parish church often summons to church only the parson and an occasional conforming clerk, while two hundred yards away a thousand Catholics are huddled together in a miserable hovel and pelted by all the storms of heaven."

For this unwanted and unused Church the Irish peasant had to pay, and Gladstone saw here one method of reducing Irish grievance and doing justice to Irish need. His bill was to abolish the State Church in Ireland. The country was with him, the Queen against him. She was the head of the Church, and to interfere with that institution was to aim a blow at her prerogative.

Disraeli fought with all his might, but he was defeated twice, by majorities of sixty-one and sixty-five. What was he to do? It was death to his hopes, to his long-coveted eminence. He determined to consult his best friend, not his wife but in this case the

Queen, and he did it without first talking the matter over with his colleagues, which made them very wroth. He advised her Majesty to dissolve Parliament, thinking that the country would surely return him; or, he added as an afterthought, she might prefer to appoint a new Ministry.

It broke the Queen's heart to part with her pleasant, gossipy minister, she shuddered at the thought of having to labour again under the taskmaster Gladstone, and she took a day to consider the question; after which she decided upon a dissolution which was not to take place until the autumn, when the new Reform Bill would come into operation.

Then Disraeli had to explain the decision to the House; not at all, even for his imperturbable self, a pleasant task; and in his trepidation—that may not sound the right word, but it is the only one which adequately explains his method of doing it—he put the burden of the decision upon the shoulders of the Queen. The Prime Minister's only constitutional course after such a defeat would have been to resign and let matters develop; he had no right to put two ways before the Queen and make her responsible for a certain line of policy, to expose her to the anger and distrust of a nation demanding justice. If Victoria had been a statesman she would have realized this, and have refused to allow Disraeli to use her partiality for him to keep him in power.

There was naturally a great and acrimonious discussion in the House, Disraeli being described as "a suffering minister who was holding office by the wish

of the Queen for the benefit of the people." Mr. Bright denounced the great injury he had done the Crown "by representing the Queen in the character of an enemy in the cause of religious freedom. . . . Any man who puts the sovereign in the front of a great struggle like this, who points to the Irish people and says from the floor of this house, 'Your Queen holds the flag under which we, the enemies of religious equality and justice to Ireland, are marshalled'—I say that the minister who does that is guilty of a very high crime and a great misdemeanour against his sovereign and against his country." It was reported that the Prime Minister, in a somewhat pointless speech, entirely lost his temper and shook his fist at Bright.

The Duke of Richmond in the Lords did not make matters better, as he bluntly stated that the Queen had refused to accept the resignation of her minister, and had given him the freedom of dissolving Parliament when he chose.

All this was unfortunate for the Queen's peace of mind; not that she repented showing so much favour to Disraeli, or even believed that she had exceeded the power which the Constitution laid down for her; but because she was still unpopular, still the subject of intense criticism, having met her people solely by paying a very occasional one, two or three days' visit to London during the year. Thus her name was still prominent in a sinister fashion, and her flight to Scotland immediately after her interview with Disraeli roused deep indignation. She did not, in popular words, stay to face the music. Though messengers

were sent to Balmoral every day, immediate communication with her was impossible, and it was felt that, whatever her virtues, she definitely put her pleasure before the country's needs. The outcry was loud enough to necessitate an announcement that her "journey to Scotland had been undertaken solely in consequence of her health."

This, having been heard often before, and Victoria's appearance, when she was seen, being generally one of robustness, gave a turn to public criticism which was menacing. It was hinted by some and frankly stated by other newspapers that if her Majesty was ill the malady must be mental as well as physical. Contrasts were drawn between her appearance and "the thin, pale face of the gentle princess who had so long nobly borne the fatigues of a vicarious queen." The Tory Press more or less contented itself with the advantage its party had gained, the Liberal Press was more outspoken, the Sunday papers spoke yet more openly, and, needless to say, *The Tomahawk* went to the extreme—

"We confess we are, with extreme reluctance, compelled to arrive at the conclusion that her Majesty has no longer the power, however earnest be her desire or strong her determination, to endure the strain inseparable from her high office, and which she has in former years so ably fulfilled. If three weeks is the longest period which she is able to spend in the Imperial capital each year, if all the functions which the Head of the Realm should discharge have to be vicariously discharged by the Heir Apparent and his

Consort, it is evidently for the true interest and well-being of the Queen as well as of the nation that a Regency Bill should be passed as soon as possible. Six years is a long probation, and if the energies of the Queen are still so overwhelmed by her great sorrow as to affect materially the discharge of her important duties, it is surely far more considerate towards both the Sovereign and the woman that she should be relieved from the distressing weight which the unavoidable neglect of such duties must occasion to her sensitive and conscientious nature. At present her Majesty cannot but feel the deepest regret that, through her own infirmities, so much inconvenience and loss of time should be inflicted on her ministers in carrying on any communication with her during this very urgent crisis, and cannot but resent acutely the faintest hint of a suspicion that her absence is owing to any want of courage or self-denial.”

The article then set out the qualities of the Prince of Wales for the post of Regent, his zeal, courage, detachment from politics, knowledge of foreign countries, etc., and then pointed out how, “released from the ties of ceremonial duties, relieved from a sense of continual disappointment and vexation, and purged from all suspicions, however ungenerous, our beloved Queen will be able to enjoy an honourable retirement, cheered by the undimmed affection of her subjects. . . . She will be able to revel in the congenial solitudes of Osborne and Balmoral without any reproach, and to devote her leisure time to any pursuits which her inclination may select.”

These sentiments were repeated elsewhere. A member of Parliament named Reardon gave notice in May that he should address this question to the House: "Whether it be true that her Majesty the Queen has been compelled through delicate health to retire from England during the remainder of this session; and if so, whether it is the intention of her Majesty's Government, out of consideration to her Majesty's health, comfort and tranquillity, and in the interest of the royal family and of her Majesty's subjects throughout the empire, and especially of this metropolis, to advise her Majesty to abdicate."

This question raised cries of "Order!" and much indignation, but that it could be asked at all was a notable sign of the feeling of the time.

That Queen Victoria was not in very good health is more than probable. Her adjustment to the lonely circumstances of her widowhood was not really complete, she was determined to walk only by the rule she had laid down for herself in the first days, and it was no easy matter always to judge what the Prince would have done. So, distrusting her own decisions, she was ever feeling after the ideas of another, with the result that her nerves were over sensitive, and any disturbance of the usual produced headache. The crisis in the Government was quite enough to upset her.

This August the Queen made the first of her visits abroad under the name of the Duchess of Kent, going to Switzerland, and accepting from Louis Napoleon the loan of his train through France. On her return

she went to Balmoral, and spent part of her Highland visit in a new house which she had built for herself : “the widow’s first house, not built by *him*, or hallowed by *his* memory.” She called it the Glassalt Shiel, and it was in a wild and lonely country, at one end of Loch Muick, the other three sides being bounded within a few hundred yards by rocky mountains. She regarded this place as in full keeping with her condition, and there she could be quite away from all Court and State requirements. It is not to be wondered at that, while she was in such a morbid state of mind, there were people who thought she would be happier dissociated from the active work of governing. She remained in the north until late in November, and only returned in time to take leave of her ministers, for the Liberals had a majority of 128 at the elections. Seeing what a crushing defeat it was, Disraeli refused to meet Parliament again, and at once resigned office.

The Queen offered him a baronetcy, which he refused, and then, to show her appreciation of him, she bestowed upon Mrs. Disraeli the title of Viscountess Beaconsfield, an honour which touched his heart in its tenderest spot. Disraeli was said to be the first Prime Minister without armorial bearings, and the heralds had to supply a coat-of-arms. When he read the description and found the words, “Supporters gorged,” he remarked—

“Now that is absurd! I have done my best to stuff my supporters, but I could never appease their hunger, much less gorge them. If it is heraldic, my

dear, let our supporters be described as voracious, not gorged."

When subsequently a telegram was brought to Gladstone from the Queen it was taken to him into the park, where he was felling a tree, with Evelyn Ashley holding his coat. He went on with his work for a little, then, resting on the handle of his axe, said with deep earnestness—

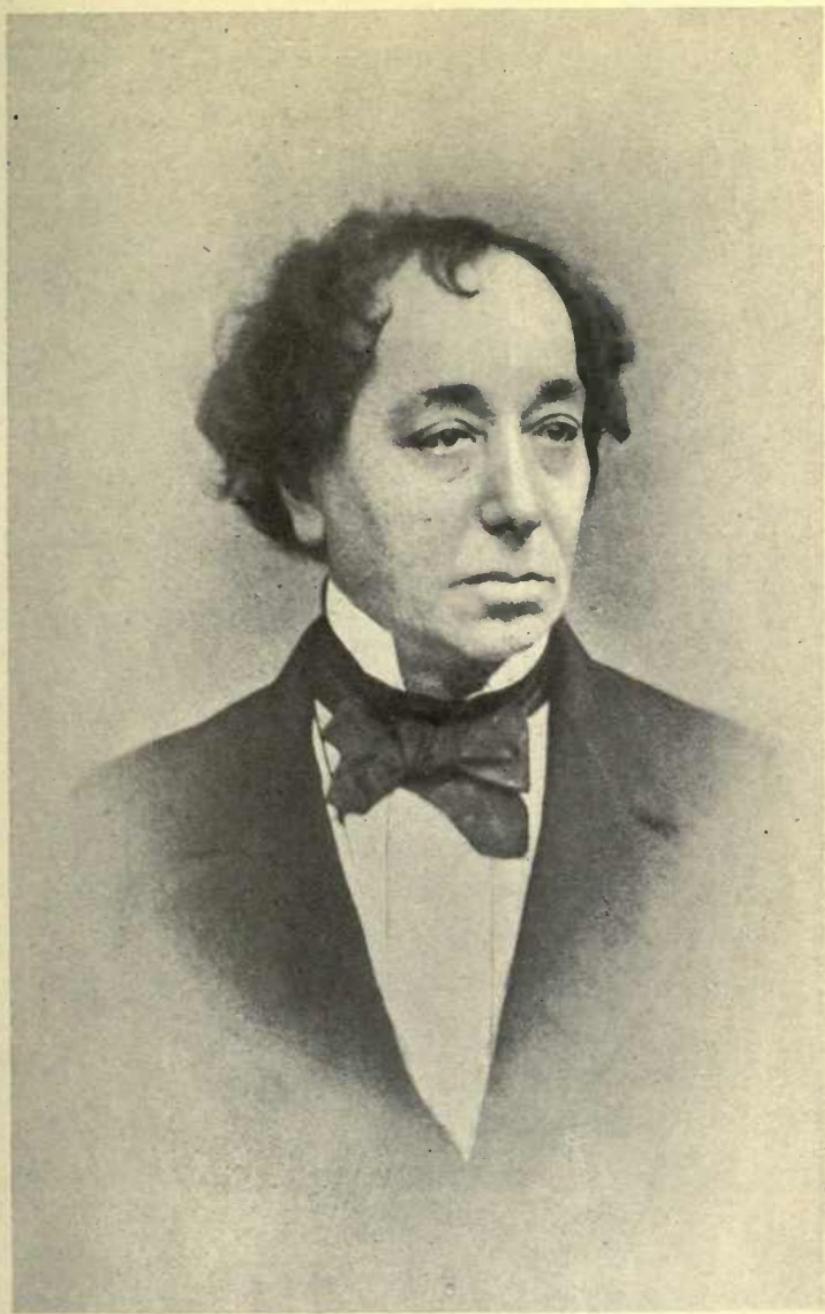
"My mission is to appease Ireland."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Bright, once so anti-royal, was persuaded to join the new Cabinet, which gave pleasure to the Queen, for she believed in his sincerity, and on the last Saturday of the year he was invited to dine and sleep at Windsor and to receive the seals of office. Victoria, with that kindly carefulness which characterized her when she had to meet people, allowed him to modify his Court dress by omitting the sword, in accordance with his Quaker principles, and it was intimated to him that she wished him to omit any part of the ceremonial which was repugnant to his conscience. He had replied that he objected to kneeling, so when her Majesty gave him the seals she held out her hand, saying—

"Mr. Bright, we dispense with the kneeling."

Mr. Ward Hunt, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in Disraeli's Cabinet, had not asked or wished to be exempt from kneeling before his Queen; and as he was six feet four inches high, weighing twenty stones, he made an astonishing figure, being taller than Victoria even in that attitude.

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Gladstone.* By John Morley.



BENJAMIN DISRAELI



One picturesque and turbulent figure passed away this year definitely from the councils of England, and this was Henry Brougham, who died in his sleep at the Villa Eleanor, Cannes, at the age of ninety, his last mania having been the collection of hymns. When Lord Derby took office after the death of Palmerston, Brougham made his last appearance on the political stage, coming into the House with Lord John Russell and Lord Derby, all three looking very broken and old.

After Disraeli's interview with Victoria at the last Privy Council Meeting of his Government he was seen to come out of the royal closet in great excitement, and Lord Malmesbury, who met and spoke to him, was pushed aside, with the words—

“Don't bring any more bothers before me; I have enough already to drive a man mad.”

The trouble was that the Archbishop of Canterbury had inconsiderately died, and the Premier wished to appoint Dr. Colenso in his place. The Queen, however, had already chosen the man, Archibald Campbell Tait, to whom good fortune had come through misfortune. For when, in less elevated clerical rank, he had lost five children at once by scarlet fever, and this was brought to the Queen's notice, she strove to compensate him by inducing Palmerston to give him the Bishopric of Carlisle. The next step was to make him Bishop of London, and now, again over the heads of his seniors, he received the highest ecclesiastical post in the kingdom, which was considered by many as an injustice, induced by sentiment.

Victoria, though having no great regard for the

office of bishop, was extremely keen upon choosing all bishops herself, and she made her choice generally with a frank disregard of rule or right, her standard being simplicity, lack of rhetoric and ceremonial; to this was added the factor of personal liking on her part. It was thus that Wilberforce, Stanley and Bradley were raised to high honours.

In February 1869, deplored the introduction of the discussion on the Irish Church and lamenting the loss of Disraeli, Victoria refused to open Parliament, on the score of ill health, and she passed the session in great tribulation of spirit over the bill. Hoping to secure compromise, she invoked the advice of the Bishop of Peterborough, and wrote on February 12, 1869, to Gladstone that she strongly deprecated the hasty introduction of the measure, which would serve only to commit the Government to proposals from which they could not recede, "while it is certain, from what the bishop says, that they would not be accepted on the other side." The bill was, however, read the third time, with a majority of 114.

In face of this it was little use fighting, save for modification, and her Majesty continued to take daily interest in the progress of the bill; yet at the fiercest point of the struggle, when the Lords, taking up the Die-hard attitude, were trying to destroy it by introducing sixty-one amendments, and incidentally to weaken their own power, she went to Scotland.

"How much more effectually could the Queen assist in the settlement of this question if she were not six hundred miles off," wrote Gladstone.

On the first reading Tait voted against it, but Wilberforce gave his vote for it, whereupon some one said—

“The Bishop of Oxford is going the wrong way.”

“No,” replied Lord Chelmsford; “he is going the road to Winchester.”

There was much strong language in the higher House, Lord Winchelsea offering to lay his head on the block rather than accede, Gladstone being labelled Jack Cade, and Lord Grey becoming so violent that the Duke of Argyll fastened upon him the now famous title of “the chartered libertine of debate.”

The Commons refused the amendments, the Lords refused conciliation, and at last even Disraeli<sup>1</sup> was alarmed and thoroughly frightened at the state of the political parties and the country, for it was felt that the Lords were in imminent danger. The Queen, from a distance, worked hard writing to every one, pointing out ways of agreement and appealing to Tait to induce the bishops to avoid pushing matters to extremes. It was Lord Cairns who eventually linked the dissentient parties and secured an agreement. Though the Queen disliked the bill extremely she eventually saw that the country demanded it, and she feared more than the bill a conflict between the two Houses, such as would inevitably injure the House of Lords. Thus she hailed with relief the agreement which secured the passage of the bill and saved the Lords intact.

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum by Sir Robert Phillimore.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE BELOVED GERMANY

"There will be no kingdom for our son unless you fight Germany."—*Eugénie to Louis Napoleon.* 1870.

"What swine! They are full of vexation and envy because we have fought great battles here—and won them. They cannot bear to think that shabby little Prussia should prosper so. The Prussians are a people which should merely exist in order to carry on war for them in their pay. That is the view taken by all the upper classes in England. They have never been well disposed towards us, and have always done their utmost to injure us. . . . The Crown Princess herself is an incarnation of this way of thinking. She is full of her own great condescension in marrying into our country. I remember her once telling me that two or three merchant families in Liverpool had more silver plate than the entire Prussian nobility. 'Yes,' I replied, 'that is possible, your Royal Highness, but we value ourselves for other things besides silver plate.'"—*Prince Bismarck on England.* 1870.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S fiftieth birthday was spent at Balmoral, where the Scotch peasants and servants were given every opportunity of rejoicing; the Queen herself principally observing the day by bestowing the Garter upon Prince Leopold and the Order of the Thistle on Prince Arthur.

On her return from the north the Khedive of Egypt was in London, and it was a sign that Victoria was regaining, however slowly, a normal state of mind, that she invited him to stay at Windsor, held a review

for him in Windsor Great Park, and stayed a night at Buckingham Palace that she might be present at a breakfast or garden party given in his honour. At this function the wind was bitterly cold, causing the gorgeous refreshment tents and the drawing-room tent to be crowded, while every one was admiring or criticizing the way in which the Prince of Wales and about thirty of his friends had at last solved the knotty question of how to dress for such an occasion. Blue coats with brass buttons were the choice, a fashion which, if odd in itself, was better than the earlier *impecunious-waiter* mode of evening coats and morning trousers. Later in the week there was a great review at Aldershot, and then the Prince of Wales sped the departing guest from Charing Cross, and the Egyptian visitor was this time really gratified by the royal attention shown him.

The one public event in which the Queen took part in 1869 was the opening of Blackfriars Bridge and the Holborn Viaduct, and this she did with all the outward observance of full state, the first time the state coach had been out since her widowhood. The people, anxious to let her know what they could do, showed tremendous enthusiasm in their welcome, and though there was an undercurrent of darkness and anxiety, it was kept hidden from royal eyes.

The workless population of London—and there were many thousands—decided to descend in a mass upon the route and exhibit themselves in all their wretched poverty before their sovereign; but their intention became known, and the influence of the

trade unions was invoked to prevent this. The Fenians, too, had their scheme of upsetting the harmony of the day, a placard being sent out bearing the following awful inscription—

“To all Fenians.

Vive la Republique !

The Queen will visit the City in state on Saturday, and on that day she will be shot. She seldom gives a chance. The opportunity won't be lost.

God save Ireland !

Shirley Brooks, in relating the fact, added, “I hope the beast who wrote it will be bitten by a mad dog.”

Each year of the Queen's reign seems to have brought its own big event or anxiety. The anxiety was accentuated by the fact that her opinions had become definitely crystallized into conservatism, and her Governments were so far generally Liberal. The great event of 1870 was the Franco-German War, but there were minor troubles to endure. There was Gladstone's Irish Land Bill, which aimed at giving to all Ireland the “tenant rights” which had never been filched from Ulster, and the retention of which has been the secret of the success of North Ireland. This Bill she liked no better than the Irish Church Bill.

Her energetic Government raised another question which was personally offensive to her, and that concerned the sleepy ways of her cousin, George of Cambridge, the commander-in-chief, and she found herself obliged to play a losing hand over the right



QUEEN VICTORIA IN 1865



claimed by the Crown to command the army irrespective of parliamentary interference. The Duke had been appointed in 1855 to the chieftainship of the army by Albert-Victoria, not for his qualities as a soldier, but that they might concentrate the command of the army in themselves. George of Cambridge was kindly enough, but he was, like many of the Georges, far from clever, and he was but the veil which hid the real headship of the Queen. Albert had felt strongly that the monarch should have full control of the army, and would have taken the post himself in 1850 had he not already known his hands to be full and that such an appointment would have added greatly to his unpopularity. It was the Germanic system grafted upon our Constitution, and was extremely dangerous in that it seemingly gave military power over to one person who had neither the knowledge, aptitude nor time necessary to wield it, and who was wedded to ancient theories of use and prerogative. From the day of the Duke of Wellington our army had dwindled until it was declared during the Danish war that we could only have put twenty thousand men into the field.

Palmerston, during the last five years of his life, had, with his moribund Parliament, enjoyed a siesta of inaction which but poorly prepared the Queen for the strenuous times that were coming under Gladstone and his new brooms who were intending to sweep as cleanly as possible. Thus when Cardwell, later Viscount Cardwell, became War Secretary in 1869, and Childers went to the Admiralty, they found both

army and navy in an alarming state of inefficiency. France was superior to England in ironclads, while Russia and Italy combined equalled her. In 1866 Sir John Pakington had asked for supplies to build six turret ships, and the Chancellor Disraeli opposed the suggestion, refusing to allow £50,000 that even one might be begun. The statements made then awoke public attention to both army and navy, and various short-sighted actions of the Duke of Cambridge's—such as condemning a young lieutenant for some misdemeanour to wear his uniform on all occasions for a year as a punishment, thus turning an honour into a disgrace—kept the matter alive. Many people were astonished and relieved when in answer to a question in the House in February 1869 Cardwell replied—

“The Duke of Cambridge is not Commander-in-Chief, but a Field Marshal commanding in chief,” a distinction which had not been understood by the majority. To this he added the still more surprising information that the Duke was under the command of himself, who intended that he should remain so.

England waited for developments, and was not altogether disappointed.

Sir E. M. Grant Duff tells that Gladstone one day met Cardwell and Childers walking in Bond Street, and the former said to him—

“We have come to a decision. We are going to alter the arrangements of the War Office and get rid of the Duke of Cambridge.”

“Good gracious!” replied Gladstone. “You have just come into office; you have enemies enough already

and to spare ! Do you really mean to add to them the undying hostility of the Court?"

This may have cooled the ardour of the two ministers, for the Duke of Cambridge held his post for a long time, and a *Punch* cartoon gave the key to the situation, saying—

"Look here, Cardwell, you say *you* can keep George up to his work ! Mind you do, or, by Jingo, I shall advise her Majesty to sack you both."

Mr. Cardwell had made the first step and had incidentally raised the first pang of surprised anger in the Queen's breast at the idea of a new infringement of her prerogative. The Duke of Cambridge could no longer be regarded as commander of the national forces subject only to her Majesty. The War Minister did, however, go further, by bringing forward a scheme for the reconstruction of the army, one clause being the abolition of the purchase of commissions and the substitution of promotion for personal merit.

The purchase system had become one of extreme danger both to the army and the country, and as it was a class arrangement it was bitterly fought through both houses when Gladstone made it one of his essential reforms. It raised such keen feeling that for the first time obstruction in its modern form took the place of opposition. That the question of loss should not destroy the Bill, Gladstone proposed to buy the commissions back at the extraordinary values set upon them by the holders. It passed the Commons by a small majority, but the Lords were determined this time to fight to a finish.

Victoria once more found herself on the side of ancient things, and from the quiet of her far retreat watched events with anger and distrust. Then to her horror she suddenly found herself drawn into the centre of the dispute. Gladstone knew entirely the temper and the intention of the Lords, and foresaw months spent in discussing a reform which was essential to the safety of the nation, ending, perhaps, with a terrible upheaval which would do much more damage to the Upper than to the Lower House. He had all through been in unremitting correspondence with the Queen, and had done his best to soothe her contention that he was infringing her personal rights. At last he proved to her that Commission purchase was instituted by an Act of George III, which left it *to the discretion* of the sovereign to continue the practice, and that George had used his discretion in so continuing it.

Thus in July, when the Lords were joyfully contemplating the destruction of the Bill by amendments, the Queen was being persuaded to sign a warrant reversing that of her grandfather. She hated the deed, but she knew that the country was with the Bill, and she was under the spell of Gladstone's strong determination. It must have been one of the occasions when he had "to harden his heart to a flint." The compensation he offered her was that by this act she was giving public evidence of the power of the Crown, one which pleased her and took the bitterness out of the transaction.

"She made no sort of difficulty in signing the war-

rant," said Lord Halifax, the minister in attendance, "but she asked a formal expression of the Cabinet's advice as she was using her power in opposition to the House of Lords."

The deed caused a sudden cessation of the storm; then after the first surprise it burst again in full fury; anathemas rang through the land, and piteous stories were told of the brutal Prime Minister who had literally forced her Majesty to sign this warrant against her will, who overturned the Constitution, robbed the officers and wished to destroy the army. The incident did not cause Victoria to like her Prime Minister any better; but had not Gladstone done this in spite of her opposition, we should never have had a Sir John French, the son of an unmoneied naval captain, as head of the army's aristocracy of merit.

There was another man whom the Queen did not like, and that was Louis Napoleon. She always distrusted him, most people did, and Bismarck was busy just now getting articles inserted into the London Press which aimed at producing anger in England against France, for he felt himself now in deadly need of keeping France isolated. Napoleon III had been a great figure, dominating Europe; he had dreamed great dreams, which sometimes came to reality, but towards this last year he had lost health and confidence. He wanted to sit quietly writing a book on Cæsar, and his enthusiastic wife dragged him into noisy discussions on Poland, Mexico and the future of their son. He was already a broken man before 1870, and he had no desire for war.

The man who wanted war was Bismarck. He had raised Prussia upon the shoulders of a united Germany to the pinnacle of European supremacy. Denmark and Austria he had stamped under his feet. Now he wanted to fulfil a plan made twelve years earlier, when he had said that as soon as he could win the friendship of Russia he intended to conquer France. He had wooed Russia ever since; the human sacrifice of Poles had been to this end, and now he had succeeded by whispering the words "Black Sea Fleet." So he turned his attention to France, the strongest empire in Europe, and he determined to act quickly before Russia could repent.

Napoleon was a little disturbed from his dreams, and felt feebly for an ally in Austria; then he turned to the Powers and demanded that the Luxemburg question, left open since the Danish war, should be settled, for the presence of Prussian guns on its forts pointing over his land at last struck him with an air of menace. By the intervention of England this matter was adjusted, and the little state was declared, with the assent of all, a permanently neutral country, its forts being dismantled.

This was a check to Prussia, but the wily Chancellor found in it a pretext for a quarrel, declaring that Napoleon himself had tried to secure Luxemburg for France. There had been some secret suggestions, which Bismarck himself was accused by some of having prompted. In 1869 Prussia sent picked troops to the north to engage in gigantic manœuvres, and the Queen of Holland wrote warning letters to Napoleon about

Prussian intentions. But Kismet had entered into his soul, and he made no preparations. England might have influenced events, but all she did was to revile him. He could not understand it, nor could he tell why England's queen, who had so gratefully accepted his train for her journey through France, should now turn so bitterly against him. Perhaps he never knew that in his great defeat she said harshly that it was "a righteous punishment upon him." Certainly he did not know at the time that Queen Victoria sat in the little Craithie church listening to her dear Dr. Macleod, the clergyman who knew so well how to reach her heart, while he preached a sermon which, as it echoed her sentiments, she judged to be "splendid."

"Without mentioning France, he made every one understand what was meant (when he pointed out how God would punish wickedness, vanity and sensuality). And the chapters he read . . . were really quite wonderful for the way in which they seemed to describe France. It was all admirable and heart stirring."<sup>1</sup> One of the chapters was Isaiah xxviii, crying woe upon drunkards: "They are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink, they err in vision, they stumble in judgment. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, for there is no place clean."

Poor wicked France and poor Louis Napoleon! How he had been beloved fifteen years earlier! But since then he had won from Austria some of her

<sup>1</sup> Queen's Diary.

filched possessions; and now he was opposed to the dear Germany, in which lay the interests of her children.

A German scheme to put a Hohenzollern on the throne of Spain, thus sandwiching France between two of that family, caused disagreement, but the matter was in process of being arranged, and Emperor William wrote a telegram from Ems, which would have smoothed negotiations. It passed through the hands of Bismarck, who made important deletions, and war was declared.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It should never be forgotten by Englishmen that one of Germany's methods in making war is to secure the assistance of the Press in each country. Thus, at this time many articles appeared in English papers which were written by Busch, or some other tool of Bismarck. In July 1870 he caused to be inserted in "non-official German papers and in the Belgian and English Press paragraphs about the way the English observed neutrality. . . . They impartially permit both sides to purchase horses and munitions of war in England. It is unfortunate, however, that France alone can avail herself of this liberality, as will appear from a glance at the geographical position of the two countries, and from the superiority of the French at sea."

This point was laboured for some time, Lord Granville being accused of favouring France, and the result was a flutter in England among politicians, a Bill being suggested to amend the laws regulating neutrality. So easily did we fall into the German trap! However, Bismarck came to the decision to let matters drop because, though Granville was not what they desired, he was not prejudiced, and if he were overthrown his successor might be worse. All this and much more of the same kind can be read in the various books on Bismarck, written by Busch, notably *Some Secret Pages of Bismarck's History*. Any English newspaper which plays into a German enemy's hand is open to suspicion.

Victoria's two sons-in-law, "Fritz" and Louis of Hesse, were commanding portions of the German army, and the Queen followed their actions keenly, and was also constantly in correspondence with the Crown Princess and Princess Alice, sending them hospital material. The latter wrote to her mother—

"How I sympathize with you, for I know with what fervour you wish well to Germany. All the world knows well the services rendered to Germany by England, the dangers that England has warded off from her, and that all is owing to your wisdom, to your experience, to your sentiments, which are sincere and just. You will be happy, I am sure, to know how universally your work is recognized and appreciated. What would dear papa have thought of this war? The unity of Germany would have pleased him, but not the brutal means by which it has been founded."

Prussia now was Prussia then. *The Standard*, which kept itself free from the taint of Prussian money, published accounts of vindictive and dishonourable acts. Whole villages had been put to the flames, civilians had been thrust back to die in their burning houses, public buildings and hospitals were shelled. Bismarck sneered at these revelations as manufactured in England, or as the ravings of ignorant villagers who wanted to be revenged for their losses. But these things caused the beginning of a reaction in England, and other things learned from her daughters softened the Queen's heart to France.

When Bismarck arranged the bombardment of Paris, he found himself foiled, as neither the Emperor

nor the Crown Prince would allow it. He laid the fault at the doors of Queen Augusta, the Crown Princess, and chiefly of Queen Victoria, who through her letters held the two men back. He hated all women who were clever, or who meddled in public affairs, and at this great crisis of his life he was pinned down by three women. He loathed them with all his heart, talked of them freely to those around him : “ There are also female snobs and very distinguished ones. The feminine half of our Court are snobs, our two most exalted ladies are snobs.” For Victoria his hate was the hate of the man who—far as he had climbed—knew he could never get to the top. Shortly, he was jealous. He knew well enough how Victoria had played into Prussian hands; he knew that she did it blindly as far as European politics went; he knew that it resulted from her affection for Germany because of her own birth, her husband and her children. And he hated her the more for it. For whatever he did he knew that he could not make Prussia supreme over England. So he wrote contemptuously of the “ Coburg-Belgium-English clique,” thus dumping together Victoria, Ernst and Leopold II.

The ineffable Ernst was like a creature on wires during those days, bombarding his Prussian relative with reams of advice, and flourishing his sword before the eyes of Europe. Like the Crown Prince, he sent to his wife regular accounts of what happened, and after the battle of Worth he wrote in this delightful style—

“ I am able to begin with the joyful words,

'another bloody battle,' as the telegraph has informed you, brilliant and victorious."

Emperor William sent the like news to his empress, in words which *Punch* scarcely altered in the lines—

“My dear Augusta,  
We've had a buster.  
Laid ten thousand Frenchmen low !  
Thank God from whom all blessings flow ! ”

As far as Napoleon was concerned the war was quickly over; hardly a month from the beginning Sedan was fought and he surrendered. Then came the German advance upon Paris, and the three months' struggle between Bismarck and the royal family. The Crown Princess was reported to have struck the table while talking of it and saying—

“For all that, Paris shall not be bombarded.”

She was wrong, Bismarck prevailed, and the siege began on December 27 amid heavy snow and severe cold.

Then the royal ladies concentrated their energies upon succouring the Parisians when the moment of capitulation arrived, a mistaken generosity, which but prolonged the suffering. They persuaded William to allow them to pass trains, packed with provisions, as near Paris as possible, ready to be taken into the city as soon as the siege was raised. Queen Victoria sent enormous quantities of food, but she would have been wiser to have tried to stop the war at the beginning, or at the end to have protested against the criminal fine exacted by Prussia from France. These food trains rested in the lines of the German soldiers,

who themselves had not enough to eat; and when the gates of Paris were opened, there was no way of getting them there because of broken bridges and destroyed roads. The knowledge that it was coming had made the Parisians prolong their resistance until the last moment, so that then the mortality was frightful, five thousand a week dying of starvation, a great number being children under two years of age, and "coffins of these tiny French citizens were to be seen in all directions."

It is a statesman's business to be wise before and not after an event, and there was little statesmanship in English and royal action concerning this war.

Russia had not been idle. She had issued a circular to the European powers declaring that she would no longer recognize the prohibition which was inserted in the treaty of Paris, against her warships entering the Black Sea. This condition had been insisted upon by Palmerston after the Crimean War, and was regarded with disfavour by every country but England; Palmerston himself not believing that it could be enforced for more than ten years, but it had lasted fifteen. On receipt of the Russian circular Odo Russell was sent to the Prussian King to say that unless he could induce the Muscovite to withdraw the circular, England would go to war. Bismarck was utterly surprised at a belligerent tone from England, and seeing that it was meant he consented to use his influence, protesting that the whole affair was a remarkable, new and unexpected event to him. Yet in his reminiscences we find him boasting of his share

in the transaction. "But for us they (the Russians) would not have obtained it from France and England."

The circular was withdrawn, a conference was called, and Russia's freedom in the Black Sea was assured by pacific means.

In spite of the Queen's love for Germany, Bismarck was too strong for her, and when the war was over she was, next to the Crown Princess, the most unpopular person in that kingdom. Indeed, a most extraordinary wave of anger against England swept over the land, anger which had its root in jealousy of a people which could see neighbouring countries ravaged by war and yet sit quietly behind their cliffs and suffer no like damage.

One of the Queen's strongest qualities was that of personal sympathy, and when Sedan sealed the fate of Napoleon and Eugénie, the latter fled to England, being received by Victoria, who had always loved her, with tears for her plight. Grant Duff said of Eugénie years earlier, "she is brave and would show well indeed if she had to dare anything in the streets of Paris." That chance had arrived in September 1870, when, with Madam Le Breton, she fled through the palace and galleries of the Louvre, and sat silently for hours hidden in the dark corner of a conveyance in the Rue de Rivoli, surrounded by the rabble which blocked the streets, until at last she got away. Reaching a station outside Paris, she had again to wait for a train, and her only safety from detection was a newspaper which she held before her face and which saved her from discovery and possible death.

Once in England she went to Chislehurst, where Mary of Teck, one of her first callers, found her sadly changed and wrinkled, while the Duke of Cambridge thought her looking sixty and very low and subdued. It was of her that some one later said, "Her face makes me think of Rudyard Kipling's story, *The Gate of a Hundred Sorrows.*"

Napoleon, a prisoner at Wilhelmshöhe in Cassel, was trying to get some moderation of the terms of peace by suggesting a common German-Franco war against England. This should not raise surprise, for he had nothing for which to thank England. It was many years before the world knew of this, and if Victoria heard of it at the time from Fritz, she did not let it prevent her offering an asylum to the dethroned emperor. He too came to Chislehurst, and once he again met the English queen, she succumbed anew to his charm of manner, and remained his firm friend until his death in January 1873; at which event she wept publicly and showed such grief that her people were astonished.

## CHAPTER X

### FOR MONEY, MONEY'S WORTH

“Our faithful Commons, 'tis a story  
To say you're Radical or Tory.  
You vote your Queen such generous doles,  
You are all Liberal, bless your souls.”

*Contemporary verse.*

“The fact is there are too many of us.”—*The old Duchess of Gloucester.*

THAT children bring sorrow as well as joy is a trite saying of which Queen Victoria experienced the truth. She was most disappointed in the Prince of Wales, whom she had laboured so hard to develop on her own lines, only to find him resolutely bent on running on his own. Princess Louise did not marry a German Serene Highness, and therefore was scarcely satisfactory. Prince Alfred was more promising, as he was showing a remarkable carefulness in money matters and an extensive knowledge of stock-exchange fluctuations which must have pleased her, in spite of the fact that he gave rise to many facetious paragraphs in the Press. Prince Arthur was much beloved and was also popular with the public. But poor Prince Leopold appealed most to his mother's heart, and was at the same time a great anxiety, for he was very delicate, being liable to fits and suffering from external haemorrhage, which showed an abnormal

thinness of the skin. Thus he was always liable to take illnesses, such as typhoid, sciatica, etc.

The Prince of Wales, however, tried her most, for his name was before the public in a scandalous way. Yet the people insisted upon liking him better than all the rest, and, whatever comments they might pass upon him, the whole nation was agreed in lauding his princess. These two did their utmost to make up for the social deficiencies of the Queen. They held levees and drawing-rooms, laid foundation-stones, dedicated wards, named ships, visited hospitals, opened bridges, and occasionally did work still more domestic, for there was no limit to the demands of charitable and public companies. Thus in 1865 the Prince had to start the engine which for the first time delivered the contents of the Southern Main Drainage Works into the Thames; a complimentary loyalty somewhat similar to that which named one of the London sewers near Buckingham Palace the Victoria Sewer. It was in June 1872 that the Prince and Princess opened the Bethnal Green Museum, and found among the mottoes displayed along the route some with these kindly messages: "Long wished for, come at last." "Come again and bring your mother with you!" "Thank you for your kind visit."

For years the papers gave such constant paragraphs to this young couple's good deeds that people began to realize that they were very hard at work. Most of this work, however, was attended by a sameness which eventually brought dullness with it, and needed an antidote one way or another. The Princess found it

in bearing a succession of children ; the Prince, devoid of such resource, became *épris* with the bright eyes of one lady after another. This was scarcely astonishing, seeing the stock from which he sprung ; it would, in fact, have been unreasonable not to expect somewhere in the Queen's family a throwback to an earlier generation. But what a prince does cannot be hidden ; so while, on the one hand, a cartoon was issued showing Alexandra as Joan of Arc before the throne, carrying the sword of popularity and the banner of self-sacrifice, trampling the while on the Fenian flag and the rod of discontent, the Prince in another was drawn running after the shade of George IV.

In 1867 the Court Circular announced that Alexandra had given birth to "a princess," which gave occasion for good-humoured scoffing, it being pointed out how interesting would be the then first columns of the newspapers if every titled person made such announcements as "Lady So-and-so of a baronet" or "of an honourable," etc. This birth took place during a painful illness of acute rheumatism, the disease becoming eventually localized in the knee. The Princess's condition caused so much anxiety that the Queen went several times quietly up to London to see her, which was in itself an event. In September, when Alexandra went to Hesse-Darmstadt to meet her nation's enemy, King William of Prussia, the knee, having been treated, in the manner of those times, by splints, bandages and lying-up, was rigid, and she walked with two sticks.

Of the meeting Princess Alice said : "Alix was

pleased with the civility and kindness of the King." It is an amusing trait with the Prussian 'kulturist' that when he has successfully robbed a nation, he declares that he has done it for that nation's good and does his best to make it believe it and 'kiss and be friends.'"

Albert Edward had some accidents during these years which perhaps added to the excitement of his existence, being spun off his horse by a heavily antlered stag when shooting in Germany, but without receiving injury; later in Rotten Row a runaway steed cannoned into him, sending his horse down like a rabbit struck with shot and apparently rolling over his rider, the intruder jumping clear over both. But again he was not hurt, and remounted and rode away before much of a crowd could gather. A volunteer was arrested for threatening to shoot the Prince, and carrying on parade ball cartridges in his pocket for that purpose. Thus when Albert Edward was in Russia and a report was sent to his wife that he had been killed there, she at once believed it. It was, however, false, though other dangers to which he laid himself open were true enough.

These were the dangers of gossip, scandal and fierce anger in various circles, which all culminated in 1871, when not only was his name publicly used in what was known as the Mordaunt Divorce Case, but he himself was called as a witness.

Sir Charles Mordaunt wanted a divorce from his wife, she having owned to him that "she had done very wrong" with several people, among them being

the Prince of Wales. What would have been divulged had the case taken its normal course it is not easy to say, but the onus of embroiling the Prince was too much for all but the defendant's counsel. So the convenient question was raised as to whether Lady Mordaunt was sound enough mentally to plead a defence, and upon this point the trial took place. Sir Charles's counsel indignantly repudiated the assertion that he had subpoenaed the Prince, whereupon counsel on the opposite side subpoenaed him. Part of Sir Charles's examination ran—

"I believe you had no personal acquaintance with his Royal Highness?"

"I can't say that I knew him well. I had a slight acquaintance and had spoken to him, but he was not a friend of mine."

"Did he ever come to your house upon any invitation of yours?"

"Never."

"Did you ever have any conversation with your wife about him?"

"I did. I warned her against continuing her acquaintance with him."

He further said that he knew nothing of frequent visits paid by the Prince, and did not know that his wife had received letters.

However, eleven letters were brought into Court, and on February 23 the Prince himself was called. His share in the trial was small, however, the last question asked him being—

"Has there ever been any improper familiarity or

criminal act between you and Lady Mordaunt?" To which he answered—

"There has not." Applause followed this, but was instantly checked, and the *Daily Telegraph* commented, "The words, though given without special emphasis, carry along with them an earnest of their honest truthfulness."

Lady Mordaunt was pronounced insane, and Sir Charles was left to bring up as his heir a boy who, though bearing his name, was not his son.

Six weeks later there was another scandal, an application for a criminal information against the proprietors of the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* being made. This paper had published "A Startling Rumour" to the effect that the Prince was likely to appear again in the Divorce Court, this time as a co-respondent. The case came before the Queen's Bench six months afterwards, and a fine of £50 was imposed, it having been shown that part of the paragraph had been lifted from the *Echo* and the names which had been added had been secured from an usher of the Divorce Court. The people implicated by the paragraph all swore that it was entirely without truth.

Thus for ten months the name of the future ruler of England was dragged in the mud, and the distress and anger of the Queen were very deep, for the scandals struck a blow at her most cherished ideal for her children.

All in all the spring of 1871 was perhaps the most wretched of the Queen's widowhood, for there seemed

to be no form of public annoyance to which she was not exposed. That it was to a great extent her own fault did not, and, from her supreme belief in the inviolability of her position, could not, occur to her. She blamed her Government and her people alone, and so found further reason for ignoring England and expanding the warmth of her affections over Scotland. Had she not alienated the great mass of the public there might have been discussion over her new demands for dowries and incomes, but there would not have been the general excitement that was shown.

The marriage of Princess Louise was the first centre of attack, and then came the majority of Prince Arthur.

Louise was pretty and gay, desiring the admiration of her kind, and, like other girls, she flirted with any charming man in her proximity, which for a queen's daughter was perhaps not "quite discreet." The papers announced once that she was to marry a bishop, and it was a matter of open comment that she was much inclined to a "handsome, brilliant divine," Canon Ainger. On the other hand, she was never accused of any partiality for impecunious German princelings, her last flirtation being with the Marquis of Lorne, whom the Queen said she remembered in his babyhood as "a dear, white, fat, fair little fellow with reddish hair."

Whatever her Majesty's private feeling about this marriage, she said no word publicly against it, and it may well be believed that if a Briton were to be

chosen, she would prefer a Scot to any other. The Prince of Wales was strongly against it, but then he was not in the habit of approving of his brothers-in-law, his disregard for the Crown Prince being a matter of comment in Germany. When "Fritz" and his wife came to London in 1871 it was remarked in Germany that "they made a great impression, Society and the Press recognizing his importance," and "the Prince of Wales and his Princess were themselves more civil this time, and even put in an appearance at the German legation."

In spite of all remonstrance Victoria gave her sanction to the marriage—all that was needed to make the Royal Marriage Act a dead letter—and the wedding was fixed for March 1871, during Lent.

Society, instead of upholding its own order, followed the example of Albert Edward, but then it always follows the bell-wether on the sheep track and does little thinking on its own account. The people were considerative at first, for if an income were granted the Princess, they hoped it would be spent in the British Isles, perhaps even in London.

As money was wanted once again, Victoria once again screwed up her courage to face her loyal Parliament, and in February drove quickly through the streets to the peers' entrance of the House of Lords to declare Parliament open. She was received with little enthusiasm, for the people knew now that she was only ready to humour them when she wanted something, and they resented it. When she entered the throne-room it was seen that some modification

had been made in the sombreness of her dress. The material was less heavy, and a small diamond crown was worn above her widow's cap. She also was preceded by Lord Granville carrying the sword of state, the Marquis of Winchester with the cap of maintenance, and Lord Bessborough with the crown. For a brief moment the assembled multitude hoped that she would herself read the speech. But no; the Lord Chancellor accomplished the task, while his royal mistress sat with downcast eyes on the throne, the robes of state being loosely cast around her.

With the meeting of Parliament the most extraordinary discussion on royalty began. To a student of events it was not astonishing that the spirit of revolution was still strong. France had declared a republic, and for more than seventy years France had greatly influenced England. Now high and low alike were asking why something like a million pounds of public money should go to keep up a Monarchy and a Court which for two-thirds of the year lived at the two extremes of the kingdom and for the other third, though within reach of London, steadily refused to appear there. Though public suspicion and criticism were as keen now as before, it had become somewhat muzzled, for Gladstone stood as a buffer between royalty and the people; and, much as Victoria disliked him, he was her strongest protector, his policy of domestic reform alone being a safeguard to her. The feeling among the workmen that at last a friend was at the helm of State, that at last their dire needs were to receive consideration, had by 1870 reduced the

tendency to violent speech. But now it all broke forth again.

After the official announcement of Louise's engagement meetings were held in many large towns to protest against the money grant that every one knew would be demanded. At Nottingham it was condemned and the crowd separated shouting for a republic. Birmingham would not give a hearing to the two members who spoke in its favour, and a deputation was sent to them demanding that they should oppose it in the House. At Wellington Music Hall, Holborn, a packed meeting passed with acclamation a resolution that the time had come to "demand the withdrawal of all annuities now paid out of the taxes to German princes, and also that no further endowments be made to any of the royal family." Brighton demanded the opposition of its member, Professor Fawcett, and other towns too numerous to mention followed suit.

The *Pall Mall Gazette*, in a remarkably outspoken leader, declared that to be a worthy representative at the head of the State was a difficult part, "and yet a ruler of real intellect and force of character might produce incalculable effect upon the country." It rang the note of warning against indifference and neglect, adding, "Nine men in ten would preserve the monarchy, but not one in ten would express warm personal devotion to it. Thus if vehement political agitation arise, those institutions which have ceased to cause lively enthusiasm may go to the wall more quickly than any one expects."

When Gladstone proposed the usual grants many petitions were laid on the table against them, Professor Fawcett, Mr. Peter Taylor and Sir Robert Peel speaking as opposers. The last-named questioned the use to which Victoria put the money granted by the nation to support the dignity and representation of the Crown : "When foreign sovereigns come to England it is painful to Englishmen to find the enormous income is not devoted in the way contemplated by Parliament. . . . I would double the income of the Prince of Wales. He lives among us and does that for which £385,000 is voted to the Crown." He added that when a princess lays aside royalty she should accept other conditions, and her Majesty should be left to make provision for her.

The same note was struck in the Upper House by Lord Oranmore and others, yet in both Houses every one knew that the grants were assured, so when it came to a division the protestors, knowing themselves in a minority, stayed away. Two objectors, Peter Taylor and Auberon Herbert, were tellers in the division, and Professor Fawcett walked in stately solitude into the "No" lobby, provoking peals of laughter. This result gave the historians the chance of ignoring the whole agitation and enlarging upon the great satisfaction felt by the House and the country over the match.

The Queen held personally two Courts at Buckingham Palace in February, thus necessitating only one night's stay in the capital, which was felt to be but a poor return to her hungry and generous Londoners.

There was trouble over the date of the wedding. Instead of going abroad, Victoria chose to spend April at Osborne, leaving Windsor on the 5th; the earlier part of May was absorbed by glad anticipations of Balmoral; the latter part of that month and the greater part of June was passed in Scotland; therefore the only time left was March. So, though she was the head of the Church, she chose a date in Lent, much to the horror of those subjects who regarded that period as a time for soberness. Agitations were set afoot to get the day altered, and to petition the Archbishop to declare it lawful for the clergy to dispense for the day with the Church's ordinary rule, and there was an attempt to institute in London High Churches a special penitential service at the hour of the wedding.

Victoria was quite unmoved, and the marriage took place at St. George's Chapel, the Queen taking a prominent part in it by walking up the aisle with the bride, perhaps that she might publicly show her sanction. The Duke of Argyll was in full Campbell apparel—kilt, philibeg, sporran, claymore and scarf—while the Marquis and his two supporters were in Volunteer Artillery uniform. Every one was there, even the Gladstones, in their very best clothes; and the *Daily Telegraph*, reporting the gorgeousness of it all, added that the heralds who were busy about the discharge of their duties looked like “enormous human remains from some strange island where the missing link is to be found between man and birds.”

When the newly wedded drove away rice and satin

shoes were thrown after them, also a new broom which the muscular arm of John Brown sent slithering on to the stones. Being a Scotch marriage, he was surely privileged. Scotch sentiment on the event was amusingly expressed by the Campbell crofter who said that the Queen must be a proud woman that day because she was marrying her daughter to the son of the great Duke of Argyll.

In July, when a grant was asked for Prince Arthur, the whole monetary discussion was again raised, and even more bitterly. A demonstration in Trafalgar Square was attended by the largest crowd that had ever met there, reaching from the steps of St. Martin's Church to the barracks which then stood at the west side, to listen to Bradlaugh protesting, in the name of the men of Lancashire, Yorkshire and other counties, against "princely paupers" taking the people's money, some one else saying that such grants tended to encourage idleness and the evils which sprang from it. At the same time in the House, every approach to which was closely guarded by police, half a dozen members protested against the grant, and though the motion was passed with an overwhelming majority, there remained "an uneasy feeling that the prolonged eclipse of the splendour of royalty had effectually damaged the popularity, not only of the Queen, but of the Crown."

The Queen herself, fortified by her usual attitude, could see no danger in the universal discontent and no justice in the appeal of her people; she saw nothing but a wicked persecution of herself, and blamed her

ministers for not putting it down with a high hand, for not eloquently and publicly proclaiming that all that she did was right.

Disraeli might have found some means of diverting public attention, he would certainly have softly sympathized with his sovereign; but the strenuous Gladstone, who defended her strongly both in and out of the House, showed her that he wanted her to help in safeguarding herself. He begged her to conform to the demands of her position, to open Parliament, to delay a journey to Balmoral for the public good, or to carry out some other royal function; and this made her angry. She accused him of being inimical to her, of not recognizing the weight of work which hung over her, and she made the absurd charge that he was trying to force her to do work which was not so much hers as his. Her feeling for him became actively resentful, and, to quote from the article in the *Quarterly Review*—

“The surface of her mind had received an impression unfavourable to the approach of that particular minister, and nothing could ever in future make her really pleased to welcome him.”

Disraeli had little sympathy with representative government or the English Constitution, and he made matters worse in a speech at Hughenden when he said that the Queen’s duties were multifarious, weighty and unceasing, that she read every dispatch received or sent; adding, “The whole internal administration of the country greatly depends on the sign manual; and of our present Sovereign it may be said that her

signature has never been placed to any public document of which she did not know the purport and *of which she did not approve.*"

Seeing how very conservative Victoria had become, this declaration raised wide indignation, for it described personal government, autocracy. Indeed, the reiteration of the assertion that the Queen was unceasingly at work on State affairs and had no time for mere functions was breeding an angry suspicion that there was more to be feared than desired in her activity.

Upon her the painful events of the first half of 1871 had a not unusual effect. She fell ill with neuralgia and rheumatic gout, which she attributed to worry. The news of the illness at once caused a modification of public comment; people began to think they had been hard upon her, and they atoned by showing sympathy and concern; and though this pleased her Majesty, she put it down to remorse for the cruel way in which the nation had treated her, saying "that she thought it very hard that it was necessary to have this severe illness and great suffering to make people feel for her and understand her." She was not to blame for this in one way: it was the result of the rigidity of her nature; as has been said, she regarded herself as right, and nothing could shake that conviction.

The Queen probably suffered from what is now known as neuritis. In 1869 she had "a violent attack of neuralgia" in the leg, and it is more than likely that the long, wearing lameness which afflicted her in 1883 and the following year was due to the same

thing, rather than to an accidental tripping on the stairway.

It was November before she could walk up and down stairs again, just about the time when discontent broke out afresh, started by Sir Charles Dilke in a speech at Newcastle-on-Tyne. His subject was the Civil List and the sums voted to the Crown, such as £131,000 in yearly annuities to daughters, sons and relatives, £7000 for steam packets to take visitors to and from Osborne, and for insignia and presents when a royal prince went abroad, £20,000 in military and naval pay to members of the royal family, £100,000 for the yearly upkeep of the royal yachts, and other sums, bringing the total to £1,000,000 of public money. Concerning the yachts, Sir Charles added, "As an instance of the decorative character of these yachts I may say that I found an able-bodied seaman who was maintained all the year round to paint the lion and the unicorn on the five brackets. He commented upon the freedom of these annuities from all taxes, and of the Queen from income tax. From this he discussed the sinecures in the Household, declaring that among the officials retained were twenty-one doctors, dentists and chemists, a lithographer-in-ordinary, an historical painter to the Queen, a portrait painter to the Queen, the Lord High Almoner, Sub-Almoner, Hereditary Grand Almoner, Clerk of the Check, Clerk of the Closet, Master of the Buckhounds, Exons-in-waiting and Hereditary Grand Falconer.

The real brunt of his attack lay in the question :

"Now that no Court is kept £100,000 is saved on tradesmen's bills, and where does that money go? Has it not been diverted from its just use into the pocket of the Queen?" The speech concluded with—

"Show me a fair chance that a Republic will be free from the political corruption that hangs about the Monarchy, and I will say, 'Let it come!'"

The public was so inured, and in a great respect so sympathetic, to these attacks on the woman who flouted it that the speech raised little surprise or horror, and comment upon it would have been kept alive, but that across the strained feeling fell a misfortune which, though quite extraneous to the trouble, diverted every one's attention.

The Prince of Wales, temporarily unpopular and in social disgrace, fell ill. He had been staying at Londesborough Lodge, Scarborough, and after his return to Sandringham developed the complaint of which his father died, typhoid fever. At the time there were many stories of domestic estrangement in the princely home, but the next three months healed these, made people forget the Queen's shortcomings, and reinstated royalty once more in its high position.

Alexandra, Helena and Alice became Albert Edward's devoted nurses, but his death was expected daily. On December 1 he recovered consciousness for a short time, and, hearing the date, murmured, "It is Alexandra's birthday." A relapse followed this moment of hope, and a member of the household wrote that the end was not far distant. The Queen went down to Sandringham for the second time, her

face wet with tears as she left Windsor; and she stayed there eleven days, dreading that terrible 14th, not daring to hope that it would not again bring death to her family. But to her joy on that very day the first sign of improvement took place, and she left Norfolk on the 19th consoled and hopeful, paying a high tribute to the doctors and royal nurses when she said—

“Had my Prince had the same treatment he might not have died.”

There was a great discussion as to how the disease had been contracted, for Lord Chesterfield, who was at Londesborough Lodge at the same time, also took typhoid and died. On the other hand, Blegg, the Prince’s groom, who had not left Sandringham, succumbed to typhoid on December 18. Expert examination showed that while the drainage of Sandringham was passable, its water supply was flavoured by cess-pools, and the disease was rampant at a village near the Prince’s house. Londesborough Lodge was condemned without extenuation as “a vessel inverted over the mouth of a drain-pipe,” so judgment had to be withheld.

At the end of February 1872 a thanksgiving service was held at St. Paul’s Cathedral, to which the Queen went in semi-state, changing her mourning *crêpe* for velvet and ermine. London people, diverted from their grumbling by sympathy with a great trouble, made a gala day of the event. They hung their banners and carpets over their house-fronts, smothered the window-frames with flowers, and made much

money by letting those windows to cousins from the country. Some enthusiasts also spent enough to turn three hundred yards of the Strand into a perfumed pathway, strewn with violets.

Victoria was so happy that she had lost her self-consciousness and desire to hide, and she forgot to be mean over trifles of procedure. So the Lord Mayor shut the gates of Temple Bar in her face, that he, as King of the City, might command them to be opened for his Sovereign in the ancient fashion; and the people cheered frantically at this evidence of good feeling. Somewhere along the route a travelling circus got mixed up with the generals' staff and could not be disengaged, at which the crowd went wild with delight, and, temporarily, loved their Queen and Prince with a boundless love.

In contrast to this gay, careless crowd, away in some dark corner sat a sour, disappointed residuum of Revolutionaries, the committee of which wrote that day—the letter getting into the hands of the police—

“These English are a nation of fools; they were all mad this morning and they will all be drunk to-night—but the Revolution is adjourned for fifty years.”

Yet republicanism was still much alive, and there were those who felt that though the Prince's illness was a cast of the dice in the Queen's favour, it was not at all the same thing as a personal attempt on her part to obtain her people's affection, and many would have echoed the words of J. R. Green, had they known them—

"I am sorry when any young fellow dies at thirty, and am far more sorry when any mother suffers; but the sentiment of newspapers and town councils over 'telegrams from the sick-bed' is simply ludicrous. However, one remembers that all France went mad with anxiety when Lewis the Well-beloved fell sick in his earlier days, and yet somehow or other '89 came never the later."<sup>1</sup>

The Queen, however, felt very comforted by her people's enthusiasm, and she wrote a letter to them, saying that their loyalty and sympathy had "made a deep and lasting impression upon her heart which could never be effaced"—a statement which they had opportunities of testing.

The day after the thanksgiving an incident happened which increased the general loyal feeling. As the Queen was driving into Buckingham Palace yard, a half-witted youth of sixteen, named O'Connor, presented a pistol at her over the side of the carriage with one hand and held out a paper with the other. The evidence given at Bow Street on March 1 was somewhat conflicting. John Brown said, "The prisoner ran round the back of the carriage to the side where the Queen was sitting and raised his hand. He placed his hand upon the carriage and I seized him by the neck. . . . I kept the boy in custody until the police arrived."

General Harding, one of the two equerries, said, "I saw a commotion in the carriage and I went to the off side. The prisoner had already been seized

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of John Richard Green.* Edited by Leslie Stephen.

by the other equerry in attendance." The constable's evidence was, "Afterwards I ran into the enclosure and received the prisoner in custody from Lord Charles Fitzroy (the other equerry)."

However, whether Lord Charles Fitzroy or John Brown caught the boy, the Queen gave all the credit to the latter, and regarded him as a hero. Exaggerated reports as to the danger the Queen had been in caused great excitement, but Lord Ronald Gower,<sup>1</sup> who went to the police station out of curiosity, saw only a harmless-looking boy and an old flintlock pistol which had not carried a ball for many a year, and had neither flint nor hammer. The paper was a petition for the release of some Fenian prisoners.

Victoria made such a fuss over John Brown and his share in the event that she cooled the enthusiasm of her subjects, who then became inclined to laugh the whole thing aside. She announced that she had long thought of rewarding her faithful domestic servants, and began by presenting the Scotsman with a gold medal and an annuity of £25, as a "mark of appreciation of his devotion on the occasion of the attack made upon her Majesty."

Other awards of the same sort do not appear to have been made public, and it would be interesting to know if any other good servant was presented with the order of John Brown.

This superior man grew more and more burdensome to his colleagues and gave cause for much gossip. Every one had some story about his roughness of

<sup>1</sup> *Old Diaries.* By Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower.

speech and rude manners. A man who for long superintended the details of the royal journeys to the north relates that on passing along the platform one night at Wigan he was surprised to find John Brown. On inquiring if all was right, he was further surprised by the answer—

"No; the Queen says the carriage is shaking like the devil."

Neele adds: "John Brown's coarse phonograph had thus transmitted her Majesty's gentle complaint."

He tells how on another journey the Queen's reading-lamp was required, and for some cause the candles could not be placed in the sockets. The attendant tried again and again to get over the difficulty, and at last said it must wait until they reached Carlisle. John Brown would not hear of it, and, "as I fancy was his wont, asserted as though her Majesty had heard the suggestion, 'The Queen says the train shanna stir a fut till the lamps are put in.' And it had to be done."

It was John Brown who broke bad news to her Majesty, upon whose arm she leaned if feeling pain in her leg, who went with her in her walks, drives, excursions, visits, who stood by her chair and scolded if she did not eat enough or if she chose from a dish which he thought would disagree with her. "Brown, who superintends everything for me," was the best description of this useful but unpopular person.

He was said to take large percentages from the tradesmen, and in return would, when possible, give

<sup>1</sup> *Notes of a Railway Superintendent.* By G. P. Neele.

them his help. Thus, when in 1878 the Court remained for Christmas at Windsor, the Mayor went to see his friend Brown to say that the town would sustain much loss if on Boxing Day there were no attraction for the visitors. So Brown promised to use his influence with the Queen, who, to the intense astonishment of all around her, ordered the state apartments to be open to the public on that day, though she was in residence. The day was wet, and *The Times* reported that "the state apartments of the castle being opened proved a refuge to the unfortunate pleasure-seekers."

This, however, is a digression.

A fortnight after the day of thanksgiving Sir Charles Dilke was ill-advised enough to repeat in the House the speech he had made in the autumn, on bringing forward a motion for an inquiry into the manner in which the income and allowances of the Crown were expended. As both he and Auberon Herbert announced themselves as republicans there was a terrible uproar, with booing and shouts of "Vide!" while one member from behind the Speaker's chair gave loud cock-crows, a form of derision which had not been heard in that place for forty years. Professor Fawcett opposed the motion, saying that republicanism had nothing to do with huckstering and haggling over the cost of the Queen's income." It was lost by 276 to 4.

Victoria is reported as saying musingly of Dilke, whose father had received a baronetcy for his services in the Great Exhibition of 1851, "I have had him on

my lap. I have stroked his hair. I suppose I stroked it the wrong way."

But though sentiment was to the fore at the moment, this did not prevent a widespread conviction that great injustice was being done in the use of public money. The preceding autumn a pamphlet had been widely disseminated, entitled *What does she do with it?* by "Solomon Temple, Builder." It gave a statement of the case which, though exaggerated in financial details, which could only be guessed at, was just and temperate, showing how the Civil List was a public matter, and had always been treated as a public matter until about 1850, when, under the influence of the Prince Consort, the Lords of the Treasury had denounced Lord Brougham's questions, to which he demanded answers, concerning the great savings made upon the Civil List, as improper, mischievous and disloyal. By the Civil List the Queen was allotted £60,000 a year for her own private use, concerning which no one had a right to criticize; further sums of £131,260 went for salaries and retired allowances for her Majesty's household, £172,500 for household expenses, and £13,200 for alms and bounty. These sums were, as the Civil List Act stated, to enable the Queen to "defray the expenses of her royal household, and to support the honour and dignity of the Crown." Now it had been admitted that the Prince Consort had by 1849 effected considerable savings on the salary list—savings which had gone on, and even been increased, yearly; thorough secrecy had been maintained as to what use the money had been put.

The natural inference was that it had been diverted to swell the sum of £60,000 allotted to the Queen's private use. It was further known that the Prince had left a very considerable sum of money by will; this again was treated with secrecy, only the Queen being aware of what the sum was or what had become of it. A miser named John Camden Neild had left Victoria a quarter of a million pounds as well as large estates, and others to a less degree had followed his example. And meanwhile it was believed by every one that in her secluded life the Queen made further great savings on the Civil List. It was therefore felt that the public should be assured that the money voted by them for the maintenance of state was not being diverted simply to add to the great riches of one who was already an immensely rich woman. But no assurance of the kind was given, and so almost to the day of her death this matter rankled in the minds of the Queen's subjects, who felt that the refusal of ministers to treat the Civil List as a public matter meant that all the suspicions were true, and that the country had no right to be asked constantly to add by annuities and dowries to the wealth of one family.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE WIDOW IN THE HIGHLANDS

“We wish our Queen would dance a little more,  
Would follow Queen Elizabeth’s example;  
And of her powers upon the dancing-floor  
Would give us Englishmen a sample.  
That Scots alone are favoured makes us sore,  
For surely London’s loyalty ’s as ample;  
And, with all deference, we think it silly  
To dance a reel with gamekeeper or gillie.”

*Jon Duan.*

“Come awa ben and sit doon, Queen Victoria.”—*Greeting of Scotch peasant to her Sovereign.*<sup>1</sup>

If Queen Victoria took her royal position with intense seriousness and felt herself to be above all social law, she yet possessed a simple outlook upon life which allowed her to get a great deal out of it, and to find amusement where many a society dame would have been terribly bored. She also showed a fund of sympathy for personal troubles which endeared her to many individuals.

In Scotland she could develop her taste for simplicity to the fullest extent, could let every act be dictated by the habits and wishes of the dead. Albert had said that the Scotch peasants resembled the country people of Coburg, and so she trusted and loved them. In England she feared always lest some

<sup>1</sup> *Recollections of a Royal Parish.* By Patricia Lindsay.

one should take a liberty with her, in England she made no friends either rich or poor. In the north she was friends with all, allowed all to talk as they would, and laid aside her fear that they should be "indiscreet" enough to take a liberty. This was carried to such an extraordinary length that those who went north with her found a totally different mistress from the one they had served at Windsor. Lady Canning would warn a maid-of-honour before starting in the following words—

" You will be delighted with your waiting at Balmoral or Osborne. You will see the Queen intimately, riding, dancing, playing, dining. You will think she cannot get on without you. And then you will come back one day to Windsor, and some one else will take your place, and you will have become—a number on a list."

In Scotland her Majesty became unrestrainedly a woman of the higher middle class; there she knew every one in her house or on her estate—at Windsor men had served her for decades and never received a word from her. From the moment that she turned her back upon her castle her spirits began to rise, and the nearer she got to Balmoral the higher they went.

The journeys to Scotland were elaborate affairs. Court officials, railway managers, superintendents were all at work, pilot engines had to be supplied and different lines linked; patrols by the thousand were engaged to guard the lines, every over-bridge and under-bridge had its man to prevent trespass; other

trains were stopped fifteen minutes before and after the passing of the royal train, and all shunting ceased for half an hour before. A look-out man travelled on the engine to perform the impossible feat of watching both sides of the train at once in case anything happened or the Queen wished the speed altered.

As the hour for leaving Windsor drew near the officers of the Great Western would assemble on the platform, and to the porters would be left the conduct of those who first arrived, the pages, servants and humble members of the suite. Then came the ladies, equerries and lords-in-waiting, followed by the junior members of the family. When all these were safely given their respective seats, with a clatter of quickly moving hoofs came the Queen. In hot haste John Brown and Francis Clarke would drop from their high seats, run to open the door and assist her Majesty to alight.

The carriages of the Queen and the Princesses were perfectly fitted, the former very gorgeous with blue silk walls and white silk ceiling; but no other carriage had sanitary arrangements, which necessitated various stops at isolated places during the afternoon and night. Prince Albert had always decreed that a marked difference should be made in all respects between the treatment of the family and the attendants, and the Queen never dreamed of altering things. It was "a fond clinging to old association," as Neele, the superintendent, said when the last ten miles of the line had been built from Ballater and Victoria refused for two years to use it, insisting

upon driving as heretofore. It needed a strong representation from Dr. Jenner as to the necessity of improved sanitation before any mercy was shown to the suite.

There was another difference too, amusing to look back upon, but very vexing for those who suffered from it. The doorways of the trains were very high up, and to the Queen's carriage a pair of folding steps were fixed; but to the others there was given no means of descent. The little stopping places were at lonely spots where there were no platforms; Beattock Summit was one of these, and the Queen would often send word to some lady that she wished her presence from that or some other point to the next. It might be in fine weather, but it also might be in a storm, and the unfortunate chosen one would have to drop from her carriage somehow over its steep, wet side, and sometimes return under the same conditions. Thus there is a record of Lady Ely being summoned in the pouring rain of a November afternoon at Greenhill, and being sent back at the Summit. The dress of the period included long trains, huge bustles, great chignons and thin shoes, and thus the train superintendent found Lady Ely trying to swarm up the wet side of the carriage. He is too delicate to relate how he hoisted her up; but he does tell how the Caledonian manager, a very short, sturdy man, used to amuse his friends by describing his adventure in "pushing up" Lady Augusta Bruce on one occasion. No one dared to suggest that the royal privilege of steps should be accorded these humbler people, and the eventual

remedy was to change the defective stopping places for more convenient ones.

John Brown, it is said, never noticed the need of steps, and would swing himself up and down easily, his Highland costume probably being an advantage. If some suffering lady had condescended to entreat him, maybe the trouble would have disappeared much earlier than it did.

The Queen's desire for privacy was strongly impressed upon the railway officials, and though the train started in the afternoon this privacy was strictly maintained through England. If the train stopped at any southern station the platform would generally be cleared. But before Perth was reached Victoria would be in a gayer frame of mind, and there "Her Majesty was generally greeted by a bright gathering of her lieges." Thus in 1867, when criticism upon royal seclusion had been loud, the strictest orders were given that on no pretext was any person to be allowed in any station south of Perth; and by some mistake the good Perthians were also shut out. The Queen quickly rectified this insult to her beloved Scots, the barriers were removed and she graciously acknowledged the cheers of the crowd.

"No accidents ever happen to a royal train, it is too well looked after," said *Punch*, but there was once very nearly an accident, when a yardman took a goods wagon, hauled by a horse, straight across the main line just as the Queen's train came up. A gentleman gallantly jumped on the line and waved the driver of the train back, and he stopped in time. Such is the

account, but it might be imagined that a goods wagon was as visible as a man. On another occasion there were a series of misfortunes. The engines were late, to begin with, the brake on her Majesty's carriage broke; at Perth the station was being altered, which necessitated the Queen descending on the up side and having to walk to her luncheon-room on the down line. The up platform, alas, had not been kept clear, and she was almost jostled by the people crowding to their train. Then her saloon lamps incontinently extinguished themselves, and lastly, on arrival at Windsor, the Queen's portion of the train, which was detached there to allow her to descend quietly on a special platform, would not move, and it took some minutes to get it to stir into the terminus. Some evil spirit must have been at work to annoy her Majesty.

When the royal party returned from Scotland in the autumn of 1870, Princess Louise, who had just become engaged, was carried to the train on a litter, for in some way she had hurt her knee, and in a recumbent position she received delighted ovations from the pleased Scottish crowds. There was some "cursed spite" against the royal knee. Prince Leopold fell at a dance about this time and sprained his knee; the Princess of Wales suffered for many years with her knee, the Prince of Wales had what some one described as a "finicking walk with a weak knee"; in '69, '71 and '83 the Queen was laid up with rheumatism or sprain of the knee.

In Scotland, as has been said, the Queen became a different woman. She would lay aside some of her

decisiveness, would indulge in the luxury of not knowing her own mind, and would in some matters be under the domination of a favourite servant, not being quite sure as to which road she would take or which dress she would wear. Here she could indulge in sad reminiscences or homely joy, a good example being the house-warming at the Glassalt Shiel, the first widow's house. At this all, save Victoria, and including Louise and Lady Ely, danced reels, the rest of the company being sixteen servants, among whom were the policeman supposed to be on guard, and a stableman. The following is from her Majesty's book—

"After the first reel whisky toddy was brought round for every one, and Brown begged I would drink to the 'fire-kindling.' Then Grant made a little speech, with an allusion to the wild place we were in, and concluding with a wish 'that our Royal Mistress, our good Queen' should 'live long.' . . . Sad thoughts filled my heart both before dinner and when I was alone and retired to rest. I thought of the happy past and my darling husband, whom I thought I must see, and who always wished to build here in this favourite wild spot, quite in among the hills."

At Balmoral the Queen often gave a dance, but those invited only included the officials, ladies, servants, outdoor men, and sometimes the relatives of the latter and some who lived on the estate. Sir Arthur Helps mentioned in a letter such a dance at which a little "tiger" distinguished himself by contriving to get the Princess of Wales as a partner, and a coachman cut out the Prince in a "perpetual jig."

The Queen would remain watching the gaiety for hours and then, on one occasion, was persuaded to join in, her first partners being her young grandsons. The news of this, of course, duly reported in the English papers, would have pleased her English subjects, but unfortunately the injudicious monarch followed her first dances by joining in a reel with John Brown and then in another with a gamekeeper. In the then state of public criticism this was made the subject of somewhat bitter banter and jokes, the chief point of which was the utter difference between Victoria in England and Victoria in Scotland.

"It is not seemly that the servants' hall  
 Should form a Court, nor that the servants there  
 Should be the sole invit s to a ball  
 Which the Queen graces with her presence rare;  
 Nor that she only hold high Carnival  
 When her Scotch servants marry; 'tis not fair  
 To us, who royal smiles are never rich in,  
 To find them lavished freely on her kitchen.

References were freely made to that not-to-be-forgotten Elizabethan episode, when the Virgin Queen, being asked by the Spanish ambassador to wed Philip of Spain, replied, though in less rhyming words—

"Supreme is the honour of him to be sought;  
 Oblige him I'm sorry I can't, oh!  
 But lest you should think you have come here for nought,  
 You shall see how I dance the coranto."

And the ambassador was so amazed that he could only record to his master—

"I have seen the Head of the English Church  
 dancing!"

Scotland would never have made fun of the Queen in this way, but then, as *Punch* once pointed out in a bogus Queen's Speech, Scotland had reason to be restrained. "Scotland gives me no trouble, but then I am so often there, and we know the frequent appearances of the Sovereign tend to raise the temperature of the nation."

Sometimes Victoria had less pleasing experiences than balls and house-warmings, and one such was a spill on a dark night when returning home. Princesses Alice and Helena were with her, Brown was on the box, and Smith was the coachman. The latter "seemed to be quite confused, and got off the road several times, once in a very dangerous place." Alice probably saw that the man was drunk, for she was uneasy, even when he was driving straight; but Brown was much too thoughtlessly careful, for he held up a lantern, "though the road was as broad and plain as possible," and the glare in the man's eyes could only have made him less fit. Shortly the carriage turned over. The Queen—remembering as in a flash that there were things she had not settled and still wanted to do—being thrown on her face "very hard," and the Princesses being pinned down by their clothes. Brown cried, "The Lord Almighty have mercy on us! Who did ever see the like of this before? I thought you were all killed." The horses lay on their sides as if dead, and the driver stood stupidly staring. The Princesses got free by tearing their clothes, and then helped their mother up, sitting her in the side of the overturned carriage, and it is a most curious revela-

tion of the motive power which guided the Queen's life that as she sat there she meditated—

"I am thankful that it (the accident) was caused by no imprudence of mine, or the slightest deviation from what my beloved one and I had been in the habit of doing, and which he sanctioned and approved."

Dear, limited, superstitious soul! and in this spirit she was governing a great nation like England—and putting the fault of non-success upon England and her statesmen.

The way for another drive on a pitch-dark night lay through a wood, but the coachman, blinded with rain, lost his bearings and took them by a road which was no road, over hummocks and through deep holes filled with water. The Duchess of Athole was with the Queen, and General Grey, who was in a carriage in front, called back to her to know which way she thought they should go, whereupon the modest, faithful one, Brown, instantly shouted—

"The Duchess don't know at all where we are."

Brown's kilt got heavy with rain and the edge of it cut his leg at the back, much to Victoria's concern, who had the doctor to him, and for several days entered in her diary the stages of his progress towards recovery.

Victoria's books on Scotland give no hint that the Scotch were not perfection, yet she suffered somewhat from their want of manners. Those who lived near her had their meed of royalty, but those who lived at a distance were as curious, as eager and as vulgar as

any of her English subjects, and resorted to every dodge known to the celebrity hunter to catch a glimpse of her. Craithie Church offered the best facility, and enterprising owners ran post-chaises and omnibuses there on Sundays crammed with sightseers, who made a scramble for the best pews or bribed the canny sidesmen to secure them. For fear of coming off second best they carried binoculars, so that they might be assured of watching their Queen at her devotions. In their exuberant loyalty they would even stand on the seats and turn their backs to the altar. Having sufficiently adored those in the royal pew, they would then take to the open air, and spreading their luncheons on the flat tombstones, enjoy the second part of the entertainment.

There were times when her Majesty wearied of this and used her own drawing-room as a place of worship, allowing certain friends in the district to join in the service. Tactics would be changed then by those who had sufficient money, and splendid carriages would roll to the castle, filled with worshippers of royalty. This had to be met by posting detectives in plain clothes around Balmoral and about the neighbourhood. So each carriage had to render an account, and many a disappointed, well-dressed hooligan was sent empty away of his or her Sabbath pleasure.

In 1878 the Queen bought Ballochbuie Forest, which was being sold for its trees, a sale which had strong merits, as at least the land would have had a chance of being brought under cultivation—for it is the “forests” of Scotland which have kept it poor.

However, the idea hurt the Queen, who thought it desecration, so she purchased it herself on condition that the trees were allowed to remain standing. Within it, on Creag Doin, she built a cairn, inscribing on it—

“Queen Victoria entered into possession of Ballochbuie May 15, 1878. The bonniest plaid in Scotland.” The last words allude to a tradition that Ballochbuie was once sold at the point of a dirk by a MacGregor to a Farquharson for a tartan plaid.

When Victoria died she possessed Balmoral, Ballochbuie, Birkhall and Abergeldie—an aggregate of 50,000 acres. The Lochnager distillery was also hers; in the south Osborne was her private property; she further had estates at Coburg, the Villa Hohenlohe at Baden-Baden, and the Duchy of Lancaster. Osborne and Balmoral had been bought and built by royal savings during the life of the Prince Consort, and as each place ran into several hundred thousands of pounds, it is not difficult to see where the savings on the salaries and other departments of the Civil List had gone.

Sir Edward Russell in a recent book, *That Reminds Me*, gives an anecdote of the Queen, which is interesting.

In talking to a man of standing she remarked that she did not like a certain family, and on being asked why, replied—

“Oh, because they are *very bad* to their tenants, and many of their cottages are in a *horrid state*; and if anything is done by any tenants at their own expense

to improve their condition, the first thing the ——'s do is to raise the rent upon them."

The gentleman said he was glad that she sympathized with the afflictions of tenants, to which she answered—

"Oh, I am a tenant myself. I hold — from Mr. — and I have made *many* improvements, and *every time* I have made an improvement my rent has been raised."

The gentleman laughed outright, and her Majesty's eyes twinkled.

"Well, ma'am, let me say that this you have complained of underlies and is the basis of the whole Irish question and the whole Crofter question. It is rather amusing to find your Majesty suffering from a grievance as a crofter."

Then her Majesty laughed very much.

"I can only say," he added, "how good it is to find you sharing in the afflictions of the poorest of your subjects."

The Queen's heart was in the right place, as the old saying has it, and especially in Scotland might have been added, for her Scottish tenants were well looked after. But from time to time paragraphs of want in Osborne cottages were published. In 1873 some of her labourers were discharged for sending a round robin to her asking for an increase of wages. They were getting 14s. a week, but as in the vicinity of royalty prices are inflated, this did not go further than 11s. elsewhere. They worked from sixty to seventy hours a week, so they also asked to leave off

at four on Saturdays and to have sixpence an hour for overtime. The Queen sent no answer to the letter, but the men were called before the steward, and those regarded as ringleaders were dismissed. The rest went back to the old conditions.

Yet there were yearly fêtes to the tenants, queenly visits to cottagers and certain charities.

It is said that Victoria would sometimes fall a prey to toadies, and take up some relative of one of her people, being deeply interested; and when the person in question proved disappointing, she would remark, "Not very pretty manners, poor thing! Well, well!"

It was this personal desire to be kind to individuals which would lead her to make of the Court Circular an advertising column occasionally. Thus we get, in 1871, this absurd notice, "Lord Lurgan's famous champion Irish greyhound has had the honour of being presented to her Majesty at Windsor." This dog had won the Waterloo Cup three times.

A little later it was, "Madam Hazer has had the honour of exhibiting her dog Minos before the Queen and the Royal Family, and her Majesty was very pleased with the performance."

Victoria was extremely fond of dogs, but could not bear cats, to stroke a kitten being the nearest she could go in showing that animal friendship. Shortly after the first Jubilee she was said to be in great grief over the death of her dog Noble, and one reporter added to his account of this that "Noble had for fifteen years mixed with the highest society." It was a Frenchman who, believing his English immaculate, observed

that in regard to her Government the Queen was only a *puppy!* A goat that Victoria once gave as a mascot, then called a pet, to the Welsh Fusiliers, was well behaved for a time, as a Queen's gift should be. But he grew tired of virtue, and took to mischief, his culminating crime being to butt his colonel when he was in the act of pushing in his trouser-strap, thus throwing him against a wall and causing black eyes. Had it not been for his splendid youthful record the goat would have been drummed out of the regiment, as it was he was ever after known by the disgraceful title of the Rebel.

## CHAPTER XII

### FAMILY JARS

"A more effete, ungracious, uncivilized creature than this yellow-faced Persian could not be imagined, but English society, while he was in London, prostrated itself before him and his ugly jewels as if he were some demi-god fresh from Olympus . . . a man without recommendation except that he is called by his slaves and courtiers, and by himself, the King of kings and the Lord of lords."—*Lord Ronald Gower*: '*Reminiscences*.'

"Marie of Edinburgh made a fuss  
And summoned to her aid her royal dad,  
Because a princess who's most dear to us  
Declined to listen to her foolish fad,  
Or questions of precedence to discuss.  
But if it's true then Marie must take care,  
Lest she be called the little Russian Bear."

*The Hornet.*

DURING these years of royal domestic and semi-domestic happenings her Majesty's Government had also been busy. The Ballot Act was passed, also the Irish Land Act of 1870, and the matter before the country early in 1873 was the Irish University Bill. On this Gladstone was defeated by three and promptly tendered his resignation, which the Queen just as promptly and much more delightedly accepted. Gladstone had bored her to death by wanting her to understand the intricacies of his bills, and one day she had handed over his explanation of the Irish Bill to

Theodore Martin with the request that he would reduce it all to a few lines !

So as Disraeli had done his utmost to overthrow the Government, bringing members from the far ends of the country—and even further, she sent for him as confidently as she said good-bye to Gladstone, and—he declined to serve her ! “ He could not undertake to carry on her Majesty’s Government in the present House of Commons,” and “ he would not advise her Majesty to recommend a dissolution.”

Such a reply, unparliamentary and unprecedented, seemed like that of a mischievous boy who, having created havoc, refused to do his share in putting things straight ; but in reality it was his way, not exactly well principled, of carrying out his own policy. He knew that he could not use his little majority, and he wanted to turn it into a large one. So while Gladstone had to go back to work, and the Queen endured it with distress, Disraeli stumped the country discrediting the Government, accusing the Ministry of every wickedness, and explaining that they “ sat in a row on the Treasury benches,” reminding him “ of a range of extinct volcanoes.”

Early in August Gladstone went to Osborne to see the Queen, and late in August he went to Balmoral to stay a few days, during which Victoria displayed perfect good-humour and interest in his family, saying to Lord Granville “ that she had never known Gladstone so remarkably agreeable.”

She had special reason for wanting the help of a minister sympathetic to her interests, and Gladstone

had ever done his best for her in money matters, the trouble being that the Prince of Wales was overwhelmed with debt, £600,000 being the rumoured sum, and either she would have to pay it or the country must do so. She had looked backwards into history for a precedent, and had found that the debts of George IV when Prince had been paid by the nation, and she trusted that the same thing would happen again. Thus Gladstone was asked to pass a Bill to liquidate the Prince's liabilities. He, with his finger on the pulse of the nation, dared not, for her own sake, accede. He made a suggestion, however, which might have been carried into effect had it not been for the strong opposition of Sir Charles Dilke. The suggestion was that Victoria should transfer to Albert Edward some real estate, which would naturally go to him at her death; and to circumvent the law that this property would become national property and therefore inalienable if the heir received it before his accession, Gladstone proposed a Bill guaranteeing its remaining personal property. With Dilke tabulating the immense royal personal possessions, bought perhaps with Civil List money, it proved impossible that such a Bill could be allowed to slip through.

The only plan left was that the Queen should pay these debts herself, and it was with some justice asked, why not? The Prince had been doing her work on little more than a fourth of the sum especially allowed to her Majesty for the purpose, and though it is more than probable that a large proportion of the debts had

been contracted in ways that had no relation to State concerns, yet it must be remembered that the Prince had been deliberately shut out from any intellectual share in the country's affairs, and was so much the more likely to find amusement by easy and extravagant means.

The Queen could not see that she was responsible, so, disappointed and angry at Gladstone's failure, she eagerly awaited a change of Government, but—though I do not know the sequel—she probably paid the debts, for Abergeldie, a property owned by the Prince in Scotland near Balmoral, passed into her hands. It may be that Gladstone tried to salve her disappointment by bringing in the Crown Private Estates Act, for such a one was passed this year, by which the Queen was given the power to invest savings like a private person, a course hitherto against the law, as it was thought undesirable that the monarch should be independent of Parliament.

In later years Victoria rebuked Gladstone strongly for making speeches in other places than his own constituency, but it did not trouble her in 1873 that Disraeli, the leader of the Opposition, broke political rules by holding public meetings over the country; it was but a means to a good end, and her desires were fulfilled in February 1874 when the Ministry went to the country and were hopelessly beaten.

So once more Disraeli stepped under the halo of his ambition! He had conquered the country, and now he set himself to conquer the Queen. Two years earlier Lady Beaconsfield had died, and Lord Ronald

Gower tells how at Hughenden Disraeli spoke very despondingly of her during her illness—

“‘She suffers,’ he groaned, ‘so dreadfully at times. We have been married thirty-three years, and she has never given me a dull moment.’ It was quite touching to see his distress. His face, generally so emotionless, was filled with a look of suffering and woe that nothing but the sorrow of her he so truly loved could cause on that impassive countenance.”

When Lady Beaconsfield died her husband refused all state and honour for her, and turned his back upon the frightful English usage in the matter of funerals. At 1.30 the coffin was removed from the saloon of Hughenden Manor to a low bier, covered with a black velvet pall and carried across the grounds by the cottage tenants of the estate to the church.

This sorrow drew the Queen closer to the politician, and their friendship strengthened during the next few years. Disraeli had no illusions about her Majesty’s powers. He wasted no time in showing her both sides of a question and inviting her to think for herself. “Gladstone,” he said, “treated the Queen like a public department; I treat her like a woman.”

In politics he was quite ready to keep the people quiet with small concessions, or even to allow them some big measure of domestic reform, provided he could also carry on his schemes of enlargement and work to secure a brilliant all-world glory for himself. Thus with him the Queen felt safe both at home and abroad; she revelled in the “strong Conservative

Government," and in the idea that it proved England to be inimical to Radicalism.

Disraeli's first step towards the full winning of Victoria's heart was to bring in the Public Worship Regulation Act, aimed against Ritualism. This delighted her with her abhorrence of High Church, and that Gladstone agreed with that form of worship may have added somewhat to her pleasure. The Bill passed, and almost straightway became a dead letter. It is somewhat amusing that Sir Sidney Lee reports the Queen as being extremely disgusted with Gladstone for opposing the next measure, the Scotch Church Patronage Bill, for she herself had opposed resolutely, thirty years earlier, a scheme of the sort when initiated by the Free Kirkers. Now, as Philip Clayden said, "it had become a reactionary measure by being brought into the world a generation behind its time," and could have been of as little benefit as the Bill against High Church. Of Gladstone's speech in the House against it, Victoria said petulantly, "He could so easily have stayed away!" Surely it was evil of Gladstone in the Opposition to oppose the leader of the Government!

Though Victoria had not made many concessions to the public desire to see her, there had been a few in the occasional holding of a Court or a drawing-room, and an equally occasional one or two nights at the Palace. In 1873 she had also entertained the Shah of Persia at Buckingham Palace in solitary grandeur and at Windsor in royal style.

The people who had heard that he was bringing

£5,000,000 with him, and had also heard of his harem, his jewels and his primitive ways, thronged the streets, swarmed over the houses, and shouted themselves hoarse when he drove by, and then amused themselves with laughter and songs about, "Have you seen the Shah, Smoking a cigar," etc. The great people took their cue from the Queen, but they had to endure insults which she did not hear. That the Shah thought them compliments did not make them sweeter. He did not admire the English ladies, who were too thin, and it is told that when he saw a picture of the Fat Woman in a show, he said she was the most beautiful woman he had seen in all his journeys, and wanted to buy her. The public said—with how much truth I do not know—that when he had chosen the woman he thought most beautiful, or rather passable, in any assembly, he showed his approbation by spitting on her gown; until the knowledge had to be gently conveyed that the English did not do these things.

Men-of-war met him at sea, Princes Arthur and Alfred met him at Dover and the Prince of Wales escorted him from Charing Cross to Buckingham Palace. When he went to Windsor, which he did three times, Leopold, "who does not go anywhere away from the Queen," as the Shah wrote in his diary, was always on the platform. The day of his arrival, being angry with his Greek secretary, he ordered him to be executed, and it was in vain that his Grand Vizier and Sir Henry Rawlinson protested. He was implacable, until at last he was told that the offender was

safely killed and buried in the palace garden. The man was secretly sent to Paris to await the return of his master there, and one wonders if he eventually got off with his life.

The Shah was invited to the houses of great noblemen, and on seeing Trentham Castle, the Duke of Sutherland's place, he turned to the Prince of Wales, asking if, when he came to the throne, he would not have the Duke beheaded. To which the Prince replied that there were so many great and rich nobles in England that he could not undertake such a clearance. He was also privileged to see the mausoleum at Frogmore, upon which he wrote that he shed tears and felt very sad.

One of the amusing incidents of his stay—included in the *Personal Recollections* of C. K. Tuckerman, an American—took place at Chiswick Gardens, a house which the Prince of Wales then rented from the Duke of Devonshire, and where the Queen went to meet him. For its comedy of state etiquette during Victorian times, it is as delicately ironic as the incident of Miss Matty's new carpet in *Cranford*. There were present every member of the royal family, also the Russian Tsarevitch and his consort, whose visit to the heir apparent was quite overshadowed by the potentate.

"In the middle of the lawn, in front of the garden walks, two large canvas marquees or pavilions had been erected, facing each other at the distance of a few yards, between which extended a broad strip of crimson carpet. Over one of the pavilions floated the

banner of England, and over the other the rising sun and royal arms of Persia. It looked like a scene upon the stage, and the performance that followed heightened the theatrical effect. Perhaps if I present the spectacle in a dramatic way it will be more vivid to the reader.

“SCENE I.—The Queen arrives upon the grounds, with her usual punctuality, accompanied by her suite. Taking the arm of the Prince of Wales, her Majesty passes down the line of guests, graciously acknowledging their silent greetings, and, proceeding to her pavilion, disappears therein. A long pause ensues, owing to the tardy arrival of the Shah, who, with Oriental moderation, seems in no haste to put in an appearance. Meanwhile the spectators keep their eyes fixed on the canvas that conceals their Sovereign, as if, like the palaces of Aladdin, it may vanish into air should their attention be for an instant diverted from it.

“SCENE II.—Arrival of his Majesty of Persia and suite, the latter consisting of half a dozen royal highnesses and as many excellencies. He, in turn, takes the arm of the Prince of Wales, and is conducted to his own pavilion, into which he disappears.

“SCENE III.—Reappearance of the Shah at the opening of his pavilion, from whence he walks with measured steps down the crimson carpet, and, entering the Queen’s marquee, disappears from view.

“SCENE IV.—Reappearance of his Majesty, who retraces his steps, and again disappears beneath the royal canvas.

“SCENE V.—Reappearance of the Queen at the opening of her pavilion, who proceeds to return the royal visit, and disappears from view.

“SCENE VI.—Her Majesty emerges from the Shah’s pavilion, and, retracing her steps to her own, disappears from view.

“SCENE VII.—Simultaneous reappearance of the two sovereigns at the openings of their respective marquees, whence they advance towards each other with mathematical precision until they meet in the exact middle of the strip of crimson. Here, for a moment, the Shah seems at a loss to know what next is expected from him, and stands like an awkward actor who has forgotten his part; but her Majesty sets him right by gracefully taking his arm and walking away with her illustrious visitor, until lost to view down the long avenue of ancestral trees.”

Which of the two most enjoyed this punctilioiusness, the Queen or the Shah, and did it satisfy a social need or was it engaged in for the pleasure of the assembled multitude?

When the Shah left our shores he noted in his diary, “It was evident that the people of England were all sorry and grieved in their hearts at our departure.”

The visit of the Tsarevitch was not without meaning, and had been prefaced by the diplomatic but secret mission to Victoria of Count Schouvaloff earlier in the year. To both she was very amiable, for the suggestion was a marriage between the Grand Duchess Marie and Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh. When it was announced every one seemed pleased, excepting Mr. Peter Taylor and eighteen members of Parliament, who voted against the second reading of the Bill for allowing Alfred an additional £10,000 a year. When this was carried in July, Gladstone laid stress on the Tsar's promise to allow his daughter £6000 yearly and a pension of £30,000; but the report went that she would receive £20,000 as an annuity and a dowry of £200,000, which was certainly more likely. A complaint was made that the Bill had been introduced very late in the session, and Gladstone, usually a very truthful man, excused this by saying that it was a case of deep love on both sides, and lapsing into poetry, continued—

“Does my honourable friend think that the sentiments of love can be restrained?

‘Love, free as air, at sight of human ties  
Spreads his light wings and in a moment flies.’

These things are not under my control with regard to royal persons or any one else. I cannot fix the time at which the invader should be allowed to occupy their hearts, and to bring to an issue these great questions.”

The people, who had been solemnly assured that the union was in no way prompted by policy, were

pleased with it, for they saw that it might prove a safeguard against quarrels with Russia. They were tired of the constant scares about that country, as well as doubtful of the British policy of making a pet of the Turk. They were also glad that a rich bride had been chosen rather than some unknown German.

The marriage took place in January 1874, and when the bride and bridegroom came home to London on a cold, snowy March day, Queen Victoria did honour where honour was expected, and went to meet her new daughter-in-law, driving with her through the streets. "How she and the Princess did shake their heads incessantly right and left, as if they had indiarubber necks, and that for miles!" commented one whose name I have lost.

A weekly paper, *The Hornet*, much in vogue just then, hailed Marie as a Russian fairy, saying, "She has burst upon the Court like golden sunshine in a fusty, dusty room," and further declared that Victoria could not resist her, and allowed her to dance at will into her private rooms without announcement. Under this influence, "we hope to see the Queen out of mourning, heading a country dance on the lawn of Buckingham Palace with some gay gallant like Dizzy."

This may give some readers a shock, but they must remember that the widowed Queen had already in the Highlands danced with a much less courtier-like person.

Speculation was rife about the Russian bride, for it was thought that she would not comprehend or agree to "the German ceremonial too long observed by the

royal family," that she would have nothing to do with that saving system which the people insisted—in spite of all denial—was the Germanic attribute of their liege lady, the Queen.

The sad thing for the Princess was that she had married the most careful and saving member of the Queen's family, and one who, wanting the kindness and graciousness of his elder brother, was distinctly unpopular, also that he *had* an elder brother. Albert Edward, in spite of his sins, was a favourite with the public, while it would have been a rash person who spoke evil of Alexandra. The Schleswig-Holstein question, her beauty, and later her kindness and her cheerful shouldering of the work of an uncrowned queen, had made such an impression upon the vulnerable heart of John Bull that he went so far as to say that she retained for the royal family "the personal popularity which it had lost through the nun-like retirement of Queen Victoria."

It was a matter of public remark that at this time there were two Courts, the holiday seeking Court of the Queen and the social Court of the Prince of Wales, also that the Queen and Prince scarcely ever appeared anywhere together, and the one did not know the plans of the other. Thus on a memorable day when the Queen emerged into the view of her people, by going to open Victoria Park in the East End, the Prince was to have been installed Grand Master of the United Order of Knights Templars and St. John, at Willis's Rooms. To avoid the gossip which might have been produced by the two reports appearing in

the same morning's paper, the Prince asked postponement of his ceremony for a week, and went to stay with Lord Carrington.

Princess Marie Alexandrovna did not understand the intricacies of English Court and social life. She, being an Imperial Highness, felt that she had done some condescension in marrying into the family of a mere queen, and she was certain that her rank would ensure her a place second only to the Queen herself. That Alexandra, the daughter of the king of tiny Denmark, should dream of taking precedence soon became a very sore point. So she constantly tried to upset that delicate system which aims at reducing social rank to definite law, but she might just as well have demanded the obeisance of the sun and moon. Partly realizing her failure, she haughtily declared that she would not go to Court at all, and sulkily retired after calling upon her father for help.

*The Times* announced with dignity that as the Princess was *enceinte* she had retired from society. The Tsar, however, promptly came to succour his neglected daughter, and stayed a week, Marie being constantly by his side. At a state ball held by the Prince of Wales at Buckingham Palace in his honour, the two were inseparable all the evening, and seemed equally amused when the younger members of the royal family, led by the Marquis of Lorne in Highland costume, bare-kneed and debonair, danced a Scotch reel. There is no doubt that the Tsar did his best to adjust the grievance, and after his departure his daughter's name was published in the Court Circular

next to that of the Princess of Wales, as Her Royal and Imperial Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh and Grand Duchess of Russia! But Marie did not take with kindly heart to the knowledge that as wife of a younger son she could not stand first, and the people, knowing this, never again saw her in the glamour which had surrounded her coming.

There was another person who might, with justice, have asked a nobler place in the Court circle, and that was the Marquis of Lorne, to whom was given no official recognition, and who, though thought fit to marry an English princess, was not thought fit to sit next her at table, or with her to enter the doorway reserved for royalty. The result was that Princess Louise was often absent from royal functions, and later often absent from her husband's side. It was odd that the Queen, who had suffered bitterly when abroad from Germanic etiquette on this point, should in her own Court have allowed her own daughter to experience the same discomfort. However, it was the same intricate machinery at work, and heaven knows what nobleman might not have been annoyed if Lorne had been treated with respect.



PART II  
**IMPERIALISM**



## CHAPTER XIII

### YACHTS IN THE SOLENT

"The *Mistletoe* crept along like a snail,  
For the wind scarce bellied a single sail;  
The steamer was going at sixteen knots,  
For the Queen was dying to see her Scots;  
And several lubbers of high degree  
Were on her bridge, but they didn't see  
That they'd sealed the helpless *Mistletoe's* fate,  
If they kept their course at such a rate.

Oh ! the *Mistletoe* bow ! "

'Edward the Seventh.'

By the year 1875 the Queen was fairly happy in her family and quite happy in her state relationships; indeed, she was more at peace than she had been for a long time. Then into the midst of her content came a bolt from the blue, at least so it seemed, though the real cause was her royal—royal is not quite the right word, however—appreciation of her dignity, which allowed her to place herself above all law and rule.

When she drove or when she was on the sea she demanded speed, speed, and yet more speed, and she could not conceive the right of any one to stand in her way. In the first years of her reign she rode at a gallop through the roads and parks; on her first visit to Edinburgh her cortège dashed through the streets at a gallop, to the anger of the inhabitants; in 1848 her yacht *Fairy* was bearing her over the Solent at its

greatest speed, when it ran down a boat full of people, four of whom were drowned. Now, twenty-seven years later, the thing occurred again. In the first accident the yacht's commander was Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence, son of William IV and Dorothy Jordan; in the second Prince Leiningen, son of Victoria's half-sister Féodore, was the responsible person, his under officer being a Captain Welsh.

During August each year the Solent became the happy sailing ground for little vessels. A Mr. E. S. Heywood, a visitor to Ryde with his wife and her sisters had, with the latter, the two Misses Peel, been for a two days' cruise on his schooner yacht. A rule of the sea provides that a steamer gives place to a sailing vessel when on the starboard tack, for obvious reasons, and Heywood's ship, the *Mistletoe*, was keeping steadily but slowly, for there was no wind, on its course, when the Queen's yacht, the *Alberta*, was seen to be coming towards them at the rate of sixteen or seventeen knots an hour. No one dreamed of an accident, but Prince Leiningen—if he was anything but a mere figurehead—evidently thought the yacht would save itself somehow, and did not attempt to alter his ship's course until he was within twenty yards of the *Mistletoe*. The latter boat tried, too late, to avert collision, and it was rammed nearly amidships.

Commander Fullerton of the *Alberta* and some sailors plunged into the sea to save people, but Leiningen at once ordered his vessel to be backed, which caused the *Mistletoe* to sink in three minutes. He did this, he said, to prevent spars falling upon the

*Alberta*, and so even when the accident had happened, lives which might have been saved were lost unnecessarily, for the sinking of the *Mistletoe* caused the very thing which the thoughtless German wished to avoid, in that it dragged the mainmast and rigging across the *Alberta's* bowsprit. These in their fall carried Miss Peel, the master, and Captain Fullerton down with the vessel. Fullerton rose at once, the master was picked up in a drowning state and died in half an hour; Miss Peel's body was found entangled in the rigging; a dead sailor was also picked up some days later, and two others were injured.

Victoria stood on the bridge of the *Alberta*, wringing her hands, through this dreadful scene, and—as was expressly stated in the papers—giving orders that every effort should be made to save the persons on board! but Captain Fullerton and the sailors who plunged did not wait for orders, royal or otherwise. The reports also laid great stress upon the fact that her Majesty spoke to the Miss Peel who was saved and made constant inquiries after the injured, and that on reaching Gosport she gave orders that no efforts were to be spared on behalf of the sufferers, and every attention was to be paid to their wants. Had she not done so it would have been monstrous, but to report such natural acts was to reduce a tragedy to the limits of the Court Circular.

The *Alberta* was half an hour late in arriving at Gosport, where anxiety was felt for its safety, so punctual was the Queen, and when it drew up in Clarence Yard it was noted that its bowsprit was

carried away and the bows broken. The royal family immediately went to the train, but her Majesty was very anxious and dubious about starting, as she feared that, the train being behind time, some accident might happen. However, she was assured that a late train was always looked for more anxiously than one running punctually, and that every precaution would be taken.<sup>1</sup>

This accident made a great sensation, which recurred for months, revived by Coroners, Admiralty and Parliamentary Inquiries. But the sensation was not so much horror at the accident—accidents had happened before—but horror at the indifference shown publicly by the Queen. Never once was a word or sign allowed to reach her people that she felt sorrow or wished to make reparation. She rode over her subjects and passed on to the north, and papers reported the ordinary, trivial occurrences taking place which were usual at Balmoral. She may have been prostrated with grief, her nerves may have been shaken to pieces; if so, no one heard of it, and she was judged according to what people knew. Her only activity was displayed in trying to save her servants from blame and in endeavouring to fasten the fault upon the victims of the disaster.

There were several coroner's inquests, but information about one will suffice, though in all attempts were made to suppress free disclosures. Leiningen was called as a witness at the first, and refused to answer a question until he had read aloud a letter he had received from his queen-aunt, which frankly condoled

<sup>1</sup> *Railway Reminiscences.* By Superintendent G. P. Neele.

with him in this trouble and expressed her Majesty's thorough confidence in his ability and carefulness. It was evidently intended to impress coroner and jury in his favour.

Yet he had to admit that the *Alberta* was going at a speed which was dangerous in so crowded a sea, that it was an unbreakable rule that a steamer must give way to a sailing vessel on the starboard tack, and that had the *Alberta*'s helm been put to starboard she would have passed at the stern of the *Mistletoe*; also that no order was given to alter the *Alberta*'s course until she was within fifteen or twenty yards of the yacht. One of the quartermasters declared that the *Alberta* had got into such a position that she would have run the schooner down in any case.

The commander of the *Victoria and Albert*, which was following the *Alberta*, gave curious evidence. He spoke of "the speed at which the royal yachts are obliged to go," and on being questioned as to his meaning, replied—

"Her Majesty, having the fastest yachts built for the special purpose of passing to her residence at the Isle of Wight, she is desirous to make the passage as rapidly as possible. The officers conducting the royal yacht were at the same time to take every precaution to ensure the safety of the vessel at the speed at which it may be travelling. It is the wish of her Majesty to travel fast. I do not wish to convey the meaning that royal yachts are to run over everything to oblige others to give way. Every care is taken. They are built fast, and what does the Queen have fast vessels for—surely

not to travel at four miles an hour! Sixteen knots is the usual speed, or faster if they can go. It is like a railway train. If a man steps on the line just in front of the train the driver could not prevent an accident."

Such a statement showed the perversity of reasoning which justified the matter to the royal servants; for the only likeness between the yacht and the train was in the use of steam, the train having no liberty of movement. But beyond that was the absolute belief that if the Queen wished to make the Solent and the bays near Ryde dangerous she had a perfect right to do so.

One juror tried to get a definite opinion from Mr. Heywood, who had been picked up nearly drowned, as to where the blame lay, and turning to the coroner, the latter asked—

"Is it fair for me to say that I think the greatest blame attaches to those on board her Majesty's yacht?"

The coroner decided that it was unfair.

It was declared in Parliament, in April 1875, that one of the jurors was a friend of Captain Welsh, and the other was so dependent on the dockyard that he did not dare to agree in a verdict hostile to the officers. It was further asserted that an officer called on the coroner and urged the inclusion of these two men on the jury. Whether this was true or not, the two men stood out against the verdict of manslaughter brought in by the other ten, and the jury had to be dismissed. The second jury, knowing what was required, brought it in as accident, adding that the officers of the royal yacht ordered excessive speed, and that their watch was ill kept. On leaving the court at the end of the inquest

the officers were mobbed by an excited crowd and had to be given police protection.

The Admiralty Court of Inquiry was held in camera, the only thing known by the public being that Leiningen was pronounced blameless and Welsh was reprimanded. At once the angry people declared Victoria had taken means to protect her nephew. Certainly the relationship had stood him in good stead.

The Queen was injudicious enough to have a letter sent directly after the Gosport verdict to Lord Exeter, President of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club at Cowes, which ran as follows—

“It has appeared in the course of the recent inquiry at Gosport that it is a common practice for private yachts to approach the royal yacht when her Majesty is on board, from motives of loyalty or curiosity. It is evident that such a proceeding must at all times be attended with considerable risks, and in summer, when the Solent is crowded with vessels, such manœuvres are extra dangerous. The Queen has therefore commanded me to request that you will kindly assist her Majesty in making it known to all owners of yachts how earnestly the Queen hopes that this practice, which may lead to lamentable results, should be discontinued.”

This letter further inflamed feeling against the Queen, for it was taken to mean that she blamed Mr. Heywood, though it had been shown that he and his party were at tea in the saloon until there was a cry of danger and were not royalty-hunting. It was also taken to mean that Victoria did not intend to lessen

her speed. The members of the club were furious and instructed their secretary to reply that, in the opinion of the club, "the royal yachts in the Solent violated without restraint the ordinary rules of navigation."

*Punch* apologized for the Queen's letter by saying that half of it had been lost, and that in the missing part the Queen had commanded General Ponsonby to remind all officers of her ships to keep a careful lookout, and never under any circumstances to go at excessive speed. Above all, it was to be borne in mind that the maritime rule of the road between steam and sailing vessels admitted of no exception, whatever be the dignity of the flag or the rank of the passenger on board the steamer.

It was stated that Victoria had compensated the widows of the drowned men, and it is impossible not to hope earnestly that it was so, for she had great sympathy with those who lost by death. The newspapers asserted, however, that it was not true, that she had not given a penny, but that it was the Admiralty which had allotted £400 to one and £500 to the other, on condition that these terms were accepted as a full discharge of all claims. Heywood, it was said, had set an example of patience, self-control and personal liberality which put royalty and officialdom to the blush, for he had paid his crew their wages in full and had compensated them for their losses. He received £3000 from the Admiralty, which could not, however, have compensated him for the loss of his schooner. One outspoken paper asked the following questions: "Has the Queen sent Heywood a cheque for the loss of his

yacht? Has she given the crew a single sixpence? Has she done what would have been more queenly still, ordered a new yacht for Mr. Heywood? Has she given orders that the speed of her yacht should be lessened? Has she reprimanded her officers? She has done none of these things, but has done what would influence a verdict and has insulted the subject who has been so generously forbearing."

Very bitter was the feeling against the Queen—a bitterness caused by her resolute silence, by her refusal to acknowledge that she or those about her could be wrong, and the indirect attempt to put blame on other shoulders. It all came back to the old cause of dissension between her and her people, the difference in the point of view concerning what was royal, the difference between the German view and the English, the difference between the sovereign who felt personally above law, and the ideal sovereign who was the proud upholder of law in every way to her people.

## CHAPTER XIV

### QUEEN-EMPERESS

"In the fulness of years and of successful management the Lady of the House was buried, and her memory is cherished still—but it is the memory of the manager of the 'Queen's Head,' and not of the 'Empress's Crown.' Under the former she had won her high repute; the other could add nothing to it."—*The Blot on the Queen's Head.*

"Those who were present at dinner when Disraeli proposed the Queen's health as Empress of India, with a little speech as flowery as the oration of a Maharajah, used to describe the pretty smiling bow, half a curtsey, which the Queen made as he sat down. It is still remembered how much more she used to smile in conversation with him than she did with any other of her ministers."—*'Quarterly Review,' April 1901.*

DISRAELI, having found himself obliged to give much attention to domestic affairs, was yet dreaming of wider glory. Like Bismarck, he did not find the highest place in his nation's councils enough; he wanted to have the world as a playground, to feel that *his* mind had influenced great affairs in great countries, that he was not only a power in England, but in Europe, in Asia and in Africa. It was at least a great ambition, and so long as his work was beneficent it was worthy of praise. He began by turning his attention to the truculent country near home, for Germany had been behaving in a very suspicious way.

In 1874 the Germans were fortifying without stint Strasburg and Metz, and adding a chain of detached

forts of incredible strength. France's only new frontier work was Epinal, and later Toul, Paris being made the strong place of the country. Bismarck, afraid, or pretending to be afraid, of France attempting retaliation, was preparing for a second Franco-Prussian war.

The Queen heard much of what was going on in Berlin and Darmstadt from her daughters and others, and she and her minister did their best to put an end to the mischief. She implored the Tsar to do what he could to prevent such a calamity, and the Tsar wrote to Emperor William, which gave Bismarck a fine opportunity for uttering spiteful things about Victoria. She also wrote personally to William, and he, like the pious hypocrite he was, answered in pained surprise that she could deem him capable of such an enormity as plunging Europe into war; altogether, had not facts proved all her contentions, the Queen might have experienced the mortifying feeling of having been an interfering busybody over nothing. But she knew and all the others knew that she was right, and though, had Germany been thoroughly prepared and ready to surprise the world with some false charge of French treachery, the war would not have been delayed because of Victoria, it is certain that the detection of their only half-completed plans destroyed them for the time.

Disraeli's next good deed was to send the Prince of Wales to India, a plan which synchronized with some public criticisms of the Prince, who, being tired of his occupation of making embroidery for the royal

reputation, had broken out in a new place. He had begun to vary his public good deeds by displaying an intense interest in horse-racing and horse-rearing, which shocked the unco' guid. The *Daily News* warned him against following the devious ways of his great-uncle, "who, if the first gentleman in England in manners, was also the most vulgar ruffian in Europe in morals," and advised him—without any reference to what might have been the Queen's wishes—to fill that vacant place of confidential agent of the monarchy between the sovereign and her ministers which so badly needed filling. Others followed this lead, and Albert Edward was much in the position of the men and the donkey, though he never allowed himself to be driven to the extremity of carrying the donkey himself.

The journey to India relieved him from this affectionate care, and it placed him for the first time before the world in an important way as the representative of the English Crown. Alexandra had to stay at home in accordance with the charming Victorian custom concerning husbands and wives; and the enthusiastic Mary of Teck, meeting the Princess, wrote—

"I thought her lovelier than ever. She is a great darling, and I *just adore her*. Though I am quite in favour of Wales going to India, I grieve for her at the long separation, and wish she could have gone with him, if only for a part of the time."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Princess Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck.* By Sir C. Kinloch-Cooke.

The Prince and Princess were at Balmoral just before the departure for the East, and the Queen arranged "various details of this anxious journey to India." In making his adieux Albert Edward said good-bye to Löhlein, ex-valet to his father, also to Brown; and the Queen wrote—

"I saw how that began to try him, and I felt nearly upset myself when Brown shook him by the hand and said, 'God bless your Royal Highness, and bring you safe back !'"

One wonders if the Prince appreciated the initiative being taken by the servant as much as he welcomed the good wish.

The Prime Minister followed this good idea with an astute stroke of business for which England should be ever grateful to him. The Khedive, who was on the verge of bankruptcy, held 175,000 shares out of the 400,000 in the Suez Canal, which he offered to France. The editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* at the time was Frederick Greenwood, of whom George Meredith once said—

"Greenwood was not only a great journalist, he had a statesman's head. The national interests were always urgent at his heart." He alone knew of the Khedive's desire, and promptly communicated it to Disraeli. The latter wasted no time, but, with the secrecy that he loved, bought the shares for England for £4,000,000. He then astounded his Ministry and the world with his announcement. It is to be noted to Mr. Greenwood's honour that he did not publish the startling transaction in his paper until it suited

the Prime Minister's plans. When people congratulated Disraeli on this brilliant stroke, it is said that he wagged his head in a mysterious way and hinted that this was only part of his scheme and there was more to follow.

At the beginning of the session 1876 some of the "more" was disclosed : the Queen was to have a new title, but what was for a time kept secret; then at last it was announced that she was to be an empress. The people of England were electrified, unpleasantly, for great things had been done through many centuries by kings or queens of England, and that these honoured names should be overlaid by an Eastern title, cheaply gained at the word of a minister of Eastern origin, annoyed people of all politics and classes. What, they asked, was there about the title to make it desired? Where were the emperors of France, where were the ancient emperors of Germany, whose regalia still lies uselessly in the treasure house of Austria? The Emperor in Germany but not of Germany got no reverence in England for his new semi-imperialism, the Emperor of Mexico had been shot, the Emperor of Brazil could give no weight to the word, the emperors of Russia, autocrats as they were, had often to pay with their lives for their title.

That Disraeli, with a majority of 105, could do just anything he pleased every one knew, but the sentiment of England was against the change. As Sir William Harcourt said, "Patriotism and loyalty—sentiments the strongest in our nature—are made of ancient

associations. It is for these things that great men have been proud to live, and good men have dared to die."

Every one quoted the passage from *King John*—

“ You were crowned before  
And the high royalty was ne'er plucked off,

. . . .  
Therefore, to be possessed with double pomp,  
To guard a title that was rich before,  
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,  
To throw a perfume on the violet,  
To smooth the ice, or add another hue  
Unto the rainbow, or with taper-light  
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,  
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.”

Disraeli was depicted as Aladdin's magician offering new crowns for old; he was accused of intending to demand that a sum should be voted to whitewash Westminster Abbey; and Victoria was asked whether she would rather be “Victoria, Dei Gratia Angliæ Regina” or “Victoria, Disraeli Gratia Indiæ Imperatrix”?

Disraeli liked the jibes, but he saw that some limit must be put on the idea, and promised that it should in no circumstances be used except in reference to India. Victoria was as delighted as a child with a new toy. It would put her even with the Russian potentate anyhow, and Marie Alexandrovna would no longer have cause to regard the English family as inferior to her own, while Disraeli persuaded her that so new and great an added honour would, with her poorer and discontented subjects, repair the torn prestige of her royalty. To ensure this she consented

to go in semi-state to open a new wing of the London Hospital, thus giving the East End a chance of seeing her; and *Punch* published a cartoon showing her standing by the bedside of a little patient, and softly touching the child's hair, saying—

“My darling, I hope you will be better now!”

“‘Queen of the East’ is the best title of all,” said *Punch*.

However, Victoria, prompted by Disraeli, thought that all who opposed the idea were doing so purely from party motives; she could not conceive that there was real loyalty and a dislike of snobbishness behind the opposition, even though many Conservatives joined it. She used her influence where she hoped it would be effective, and, to the intense astonishment of Lord Shaftesbury, invited him to dine at Windsor and stay the night of March 11, it being over twenty years since he had been her guest.

“He was satisfied that it must be for some especial object, and he had little doubt that it related to the question then uppermost in men’s minds—the Royal Titles Bill. Although the weather was inclement Lord Shaftesbury went to Windsor.

“‘I dread it,’ he wrote on the previous day; ‘the cold, the evening-dress, the solitude, for I am old, and dislike being far away from assistance should I be ill at night. . . . She sent for me in 1848 to consult me on a very important matter. Can it be so now?’

“‘March 14th.—Returned from Windsor. I am sure it was so, though not distinctly avowed. Her Majesty personally said nothing. . . .’

"The views that Lord Shaftesbury expressed at Windsor he was requested by the Lord-in-waiting to communicate to Mr. Disraeli, and this was accordingly done. These views were in every way opposed to the proposed title," and Lord Shaftesbury moved an address in the House of Lords, praying her Majesty not to take it.<sup>1</sup>

It was evident from Disraeli's reply in the House that he himself did not look upon the matter as of dignified importance, but rather as a pretty present to the Queen, for he treated it with great levity. He assured the members that Milton's Satan twice addressed Eve as Empress, that Spencer had dedicated his *Faerie Queene* to the "magnificent Empress Elizabeth," and added further that a twelve-year-old schoolgirl had written him that in *Whitaker's Almanack* the Queen was already described as Empress of India. Robert Lowe asked with contempt whether he wished the House to think as meanly of the subject as he did himself, and the number of dissentients greatly increased.

The bill passed, of course, under the promise that, instead of the limitation of the title being inserted in the bill, the proclamation should declare that the title of empress was to be localized in India alone. But the proclamation declared nothing of the sort, the only condition being that Victoria should not call herself Empress of England, which led to the raking up of the whole question again. A lively scene occurred through a rash speech of Bob Lowe's at a

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Lord Shaftesbury.* By Edwin Hodder.

dinner at Retford, in which he voiced his strong suspicion that "at least two previous ministers have entirely refused to have anything to do with such a change. More pliant persons have now been found, and I have no doubt the thing will be done."

Gladstone wrote to say that the Queen had never made any such suggestion to him, but Disraeli was furious, as much for himself as for his monarch, as he said it held him up to public infamy as servile. Victoria entrusted him with a definite contradiction of the statement, and Disraeli violently denounced Lowe, thundering at him and banging the table, and losing himself in a really fine spell of rhetoric gone mad. Justin MacCarthy suggested that it would have been better had the Prime Minister contradicted the charge quietly, and not, by "this boisterous and furious denunciation," have dragged the dignity of the Crown through the mud of a parliamentary squabble.

Victoria allowed herself little restriction in the use of the new title, for within the year she signed all English documents as Victoria R. and I., and in 1893 caused Ind. Imp. to be engraved on British coins. However, to the people of England the imperial title is still unfamiliar and almost non-existent.

Disraeli had given the Queen her wish, and she in return made him a lord, he becoming Lord Beaconsfield at the end of the session of 1876. The Queen was proclaimed Empress of India on May 1, and on the following 1st of January Lord Lytton made the proclamation in that country at a Durbar. In far places the colonels of regiments announced it to

assembled crowds. One is said to have insisted upon doing it in Hindustanee in honour of the occasion, and part of his speech ran—

“Pigs! The Queen-Empress has sent to me a number of cats, which I will now distribute among you. She requests that you will hang them round your necks and continue to wear them in that manner.”

This affair had kept Victoria’s name well before the public, which forgot to grumble, and she, being pleased with her ministers, forgot in her turn to feel irritated and perverse with her people. Thus, demand being withdrawn, she was more ready to give, and appeared several times in London. She attended a great concert at Albert Hall, went to inspect the elaborate Albert Memorial, in which had been placed the gilded figure of the Prince Consort: “My guilty dad,” as Albert Edward was reported to have flipantly said. She also attended the funeral in Westminster Abbey of Lady Augusta Stanley.

Another of her ladies, Lady Caroline Barrington, had died suddenly at Kensington Palace, and the Queen went up from Windsor, carrying many flowers, that she might once again look on her waiting-woman’s face. In this decade she lost Dr. Norman Macleod and her stepsister Feodore, while in 1876 died a woman to whom she had early in her reign been kind, the wife of the Duke of Sussex, whom she had created Duchess of Inverness. Of her Princess Mary wrote—

“I, alas! no longer have my kind neighbour, the dear little Duchess, to fall back upon.” For her was

opened the tomb in Kensal Green in which lay the old royal Duke.

Lord John Russell died in 1878 at Pembroke Lodge, and the next year the Prince Imperial was killed in South Africa. But there were two other deaths, more dreadful and intimate, which brought her much sorrow: one in 1873, when a little son of Princess Alice's fell out of a window before his mother's eyes, and, falling twenty feet upon the stones below, died in a few hours; the other was five years later, on the melancholy 14th of December, when Princess Alice, having nursed her family through diphtheria, succumbed herself to that disease. There was a peculiar sympathy between Victoria and this daughter, and the blow was very heavy. The whole country grieved with her, for it had been much impressed with the Princess's fine qualities. She was buried in Germany, but at her desire her body was wrapped in the Union Jack.

## CHAPTER XV

### A STRAIN UPON LOYALTY

“When the Government ordered the fleet to the Straits,  
They surely encountered the hardest of fates,  
For the order, scarce given, at once was recalled,  
And the Russians were not in the slightest appalled.

And every one says who has heard the debates,  
It's the Cabinet now, not the fleet, in the straits.”

*Sir H. W. Lucy: ‘Later Peeps in Parliament.’*

“A health to Jingo first, and then  
A health to shell, and then to shot !  
The man who hates not other men,  
I deem no perfect patriot.  
To all who hold old England mad,  
We drink; to all who'd tax her food !  
We pledge the man who hates the Rad !  
We drink to Bartle Frere and Froude !  
Drinks all round !

Here's to Jingo, king and crowned !  
To the great cause of Jingo, drink, my boys !  
And the great name of Jingo, round and round ! ”  
*Anonymous parody of Tennyson's ‘Hands All Round.’*

THE absolute loyalty of Queen Victoria to the one-time opinions of her dead husband helped to lead England occasionally into devious ways. The Crimean War was the result of an idea in England that Turkey in Europe was necessary to the interests of this country, and once the war was started the Queen and Prince upheld it heart and soul. Albert had the usual German hatred of Russia, and deplored the

Prussian tendency to court the Muscovite as an ally, expressing himself with astonishing frankness in his letters.

In 1875 came the beginning of another incident between Russia and Turkey, and the Queen followed exactly the same course as had been pursued over twenty years earlier, and unfortunately she had Disraeli, with his wild dreams of world expansion, at her elbow.

The Turks were actively oppressing their Christian subjects, the Slavs, and turning their backs upon past promises and conventions. The great powers, Russia, Austria and Prussia, drew up a Note demanding Turkey's adhesion to past treaties, and asked the other nations to join them. France and Italy at once agreed, but England hesitated until such time had passed that Turkey herself felt oppressed and sent a message to England, which was in effect—

“Sign, my dear friend, that tiresome note. I shall know that you do not mean it, and I shall also know how to deal with it.”

England signed, and the note was received in Constantinople “with lively satisfaction.” It gave Turkey time, and she went on with her schemes for punishing the Christians. Then the Powers drew up another Note, plainly declaring that, if Turkey insisted upon transgressing, Europe would force her to decency. It would have settled the matter, for Turkey would not have thought of fighting Europe. But to England's shame she resolutely refused to sign this warning, and so deliberately broke the Concert of Europe. It

was tantamount to saying that Turkey was to be allowed to do as she liked, and England would uphold her.

Why was this?

Nominally because England suspected the good faith of Russia, and was in deadly fear lest the Tsar should obtain Constantinople in some curious way. But behind this were two reasons, both inadequate and, from a political point of view, vicious. The one I have indicated, the legacy of opinion left to England by the Prince Consort; the other was contained in the prejudices and ambitions of the Prime Minister, who, whatever his public pretensions, was at heart a Jew. In the last year of his life he said to Lord Ronald Gower—

“I would indeed be very ungrateful to Christianity, which has caused half the world to worship a man and the other half a woman, both of my race.”

As such, Disraeli had far more sympathy with the Mahomedans than with the Eastern Christians; had not the latter often persecuted the Jews? and how could he declare friendship for Russia? And further, he had gorgeous dreams concerning Egypt; perhaps, as some one said, of advancing from an earl to being Duke of Memphis.

So, for what might be called English royal family reasons, Turkey went on its way rejoicing. It burned Bulgarian villages and put every inhabitant to the sword; Turkish soldiers took whole parties of girls, and having done with them thrust them into barns and then burnt buildings and humans to cinders. The

church at Batak was found piled with bodies, mostly women and children, half-way up the low arches. It had been set on fire, pieces of the roof torn off and burning oil poured in upon those below. Those who tried to escape were sabred, and the churchyard was piled two feet deep with bodies. These are but incidents in the many terrible things that occurred, and warnings of which were sent to England by alarmed English out there. Then reports arrived, but neither warning nor report moved Disraeli. He laughed at it all, called the accounts "coffee-house babble," and as they were first published in *The Daily News*, declared that it was all a party trick.

The country got hot over it, and questions were constantly asked in the House; *The Daily News* sent out a new Commissioner, who returned with confirmation of all that had been told, and added horrible details. Still Disraeli treated it with scorn, and, knowing little of Turkish affairs, asserted that the Bashi-Bazouks were Circassians who had long lived in Bulgaria by the consent of Europe, and went on to reproach the "Liberal Party with the lack of sympathy they now showed for a race of beings in whom they once professed such an interest." He also described the Bulgarians as cruel oppressors of the Turks, probably having once read Voltaire's *Candide*. As late as August 11 he asserted that the whole thing was negligible and grossly exaggerated, and that the integrity of the Ottoman Empire should be the leading principle of the foreign policy of England.

That was the last speech he made in the Commons,

and it ended on the word “empire.” Instead of passing behind the Speaker’s chair, he walked the full length of the House, turned about at the Bar, glanced round at the familiar scene, and walked out never to return.

The next morning all the world was astonished to hear that he had gone to the Upper House as Lord Beaconsfield. The moment chosen helped him over a difficult situation. He intended to stick to his policy, but he knew that the majority of the country was against him, and he told the Queen that he must resign. She suggested his acceptance of a peerage, and he replied, “Yes, but with resignation.” She answered that that was impossible in the then state of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Not only the Queen, but under her influence her Court was loudly pro-Turk, especially Leopold and Mary of Teck. The Prince of Wales was the only one who truly regarded his royal position, and no one ever knew on which side he stood, while he retained relations of equal cordiality with the leaders of both parties.

To save its credit the Government had to send out a representative to inquire into the “atrocities,” and he came back with much the same story, upon which the excitement rose high. Gladstone who, being sixty-five, had resigned the leadership of his party in 1873, was moved with such indignation that he wrote a pamphlet upon the question which went like

<sup>1</sup> Told by Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, “on the authority of a high personage.”

wildfire, and he spoke at great meetings, championing the cause of the Slavs, and saying that England should send the Turks out of Bulgaria, bag and baggage.

Beaconsfield retaliated when speaking at what had been his own seat, Aylesbury, by a violent diatribe against the enemies of Turkey, and added that "the conduct of his political opponents was worse than any Bulgarian atrocity." At the Lord Mayor's banquet later, he hinted at approaching war with Russia, and from that time no one, not even his own followers, knew what he would do next.

The Queen, as has been said, was wholeheartedly for Turkey; sorry for the Bulgarians, of course, but that was not diplomacy; and politically she never had had sympathy for small countries rebelling against tyrannical rulers; all through her life, without exception, she had been true to her caste, and had upheld monarchy against oppressed people. Up to the autumn of 1876 she thought the matter had been managed fairly well. She believed that the public disgust at Turkey would soon die down, especially if she could show Russia as she herself saw her. And then across this growing content fell Gladstone's pamphlet. She was astounded and then furious. The man had resigned the leadership; how dared he come forward in this way? She seemed to think that in that resignation he had sold his birthright as an Englishman and a politician. Had there been any wavering in her mind about war, this settled it, and "She accepted unhesitatingly Lord Beaconsfield's view that

England was bound to protect Turkey from injury at Russia's hands.”<sup>1</sup>

Russia may have been as untrustworthy as our Imperialists believed, but it cannot be denied that up to that point Russia had been perfectly correct in her attitude, and she was equally correct in her further proceedings. She said—

“Here is an offshoot of my own nation, speaking a form of my own tongue and following my own religion, being exterminated by a lawless and barbarous nation. I have asked you to help me peacefully to protect Bulgaria, and you have refused. Now I shall take matters into my own hands and fight for it.”

Victoria did her utmost to dissuade the Tsar, to make him leave his kinsmen a continued prey to the inhumanities of the Turk. She privately based her reasoning entirely upon Albert’s programme of twenty-four years earlier, and she felt that every right-minded person would agree with her. Alexander listened politely and refused to be bound by the wishes of her defunct consort.

The third volume of Albert’s life, which had been intended to be the last, was then being written, and she altered the whole scope of it, for it had reached the period of the Crimean War. The book dealt with this in every detail, and though she could not possibly have conceived it, it was not altogether to the Prince’s credit. It showed him as an advocate of war at all risks and to the last extreme. Prussia, for refusing

<sup>1</sup> *Queen Victoria.* By Sir Sidney Lee.

to join England in that reckless war, was vilified in the Prince's letters to Stockmar: "Prussia's conduct is truly revolting, and the King is looked upon by all political men here with profound contempt." The King was also described as a nobody, who dishonoured his monarchy, as a tool of Russia, as trembling in his shoes, and ready to pawn his soul rather than provoke Russia.

The book also showed how, at the instigation of Stockmar, the Prince and the Queen had interfered in politics, badgered their ministers, and had gravely accepted such nonsense from the old German as, "The old Tories have died out, and the race which in the present day (1854) bears the name are simply bastards," and "the Whigs stand in the same relation to the Throne as the wolf does to the lamb."

Theodore Martin suggested that in deference to the relationship between the royal families of Russia and England, various passages should be deleted, but the Queen scorned the idea. "Do not let the fact of my son's marriage into the Russian family weigh with you for a moment! Whatever conclusions you come to upon the facts and documents before you, express them as if no such marriage existed," was her command. The book was published in 1877, provoking five marvellous criticisms by "Verax" in the *Manchester Guardian*, criticisms which were a deep sign of the spirit of the time.

Alexander fought and thrashed Turkey, and Victoria, watching events with trembling anxiety, "did

not dissemble her disgust and disappointment" at his success.

At the end of 1877, to show her confidence in him, Queen Victoria with Princess Beatrice went, with much publicity, to visit Beaconsfield at Hughenden, lunched with him and planted the inevitable tree on the lawn. It was done in the face of Europe, and Europe duly registered the fact that in policy Victoria was one with her Prime Minister.

Beaconsfield denounced Russia so often, hinting, as often at war, that the people began at last to believe that their country was in imminent danger, and that their solemn duty was to fight for the unspeakable Turk, who had showered honours upon the soldiers engaged in murder and rapine in Bulgaria. He tried his utmost to push England into another Crimea, but his Cabinet was not with him, and he once said in private conversation, "In my Cabinet of twelve we have six parties; two think we should go to war with Russia immediately, two think that we should go to war with her before she gets to Constantinople, two think we should go to war with her when she has reached Constantinople, two think we should not go to war at all." He ended with, "The Chancellor of the Exchequer and I think that something ought to be done, but we don't know what it should be."

A curious comedy in five acts took place in this divergent Cabinet, and five times we were on the brink of war, each crisis coinciding with a popular upheaval provoked by ministerial papers, and from the music-halls came the Jingo chorus—

"We don't want to fight—  
But, by jingo, if we do,  
We've got the ships, we've got the men,  
We've got the money too."

Act I.—January 1878. Beaconsfield insisting that the Fleet be sent to the Dardanelles as a threat to Russia, Lord Carnarvon resigned. The Prime Minister retracted.

Act II.—Fleet ordered to Dardanelles. Lord Carnarvon finally and Lord Derby for the first time gave in resignations. Beaconsfield drew back, ordering Fleet to stop at Besika Bay.

Act III.—Demand for money for Army and Navy. The Fleet again ordered to Constantinople to protect the Turks. Russia replied, "Then my Fleet shall go there to protect the Christians." Compromise made. British ships not to touch Gallipoli. Russian ships to keep to south of Dardanelles.

Act IV.—News of peace between Russia and Turkey, and distracted cries of Austria that she had been cheated. Jingo shouts for war—under prompting; Reserves called out, Army brought from India to Malta. Derby resigned finally, checkmating Beaconsfield again.

Act V.—Public bluff. Loud threatenings—to sustain the Jingoes—and secret treaties signed with Russia and Turkey.

During the third act the British public went mad. Crowds patrolled the London streets shrieking for war, howling over Gladstone as a traitor and threatening to pull down his house brick by brick, so that a

force of police had to be kept in readiness to prevent disaster. One Sunday three different parties arrived, one friendly, the others hostile, and in spite of the police all the windows were broken. There were other and worse demonstrations, on one occasion Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone being dragged from the steps and mobbed. "There is strange work behind the curtain," said Gladstone; "the instigators are really those guilty; no one can wonder at the tools." (It was by many believed that Disraeli's hatred of Gladstone had caused these personal attacks.)

A few days after the breaking of his windows Gladstone received a post-office order for £3 10s., the sender, a working man, saying that he was so ashamed of what had happened that he, his wife and family had scraped together money to repair the damage.

At this time Beaconsfield said to a friend, "I have got the Parliament and the nation at my back, and if I were ten years younger I could settle all Europe." Yet his fall, the result of his own Imperialism, was not far off, for the inevitable reaction against a too enthusiastic jingoism had set in.

But before that happened his career was to receive its crown at that European Congress at Berlin suggested by Bismarck. He attained the dream of his life, and one feels glad that, whatever his faults, this ambitious man of "dissolving views," this "melancholy harlequin," as Carlyle dubbed him, should have attained to that fugitive glory which appealed to his soul. He made himself plenipotentiary with Lord Salisbury at the Berlin Congress, and through

Germany his journey was a progress in the midst of a curious, gratified and acclamatory people. This hollow fraud of a congress had its humorous incidents, for Beaconsfield, knowing that the official language would be French, but speaking that language very badly, determined to make his speech in that tongue, and he learned it by heart under the tuition of his fellow minister. Lord Odo Russell, the ambassador in Berlin, was in despair, and had the wit, on being appealed to, to say—

“But that will be a great disappointment.”

“Why?”

“Because, knowing that you are a great master of English eloquence, every one has been looking forward to your addressing the Congress in English as to an intellectual treat.”

“You don’t say so!” replied Beaconsfield musingly, and the French speech was torn up. His French was so poor that he found it very difficult to follow the other speakers, and each day before setting out drank three tumblers of good port to steady his nerves.

To the public the Conference seemed a great thing, but in reality it was a pretence. Two secret treaties had already been signed, and in face of Victoria’s insistence upon her right to pass every detail of diplomatic affairs, it must be supposed that this was done with her sanction. One treaty gave Russia part of what it wanted, approximating to Gladstone’s “bag and baggage” policy; the other was a convention with Turkey, promising to defend that country in Asia, and demanding the cession of Cyprus.

These treaties were published in the *Globe* four days after the plenipotentiaries had started for Berlin, through the instrumentality of a clerk, engaged temporarily in copying at the Foreign Office. He was accused at Bow Street of stealing information, but the charge was quashed as the Government dared not risk publicity. Thus, as Moncure Conway wrote, "the whole theoretic display ended with the grand London Ballet, *Aphrodite*, of which Cyprus was the scene, Beaconsfield and the Queen of Cyprus the hero and heroine."

At the Conference the Russian minister and Beaconsfield had a sparring match to keep up appearances, and then came to an agreement, upon which the English hero telegraphed to his sovereign that he had secured peace with honour. Joyous meetings were held all over the country. No one understood anything about it, except that the Prime Minister had in some wonderful way assured a glorious peace to our land, and some people did not even comprehend that. For at one gathering, when a great transparency of Beaconsfield and Salisbury was shown, a woman accosted the sitting member of the place with—

"Please, sir, will you tell me which is Peace?" (the murderer).

But the "peace with honour" was only three weeks old when "the bloody overture was being played all over again," and the newspapers were filled with accounts of a new campaign, involving Austria, Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina. As *The Hornet*, of

Conservative politics said, the phrase was "a claptrap euphemism for rapine, pillage and slaughter."

Gladstone, who knew the inner workings of this wonderful diplomatic affair, angered Beaconsfield by describing the Conference as an insane convention; so the latter gave utterance at a dinner to the famous retort that Gladstone was "a sophistical rhetorician inebriated with the exuberance of his own verbosity, and gifted with that egotistical imagination that can at all times command an interminable and inconsistent series of arguments to malign an opponent and to glorify himself."

The Queen honoured Beaconsfield on his return to England by conferring on him the Order of the Garter.

Like Bismarck, Beaconsfield was drunk with Imperialism, which inevitably means war. He had sent Sir Bartle Frere to South Africa and Lord Lytton to India, first imbuing both with his policy, and both obeyed not wisely but too well. South African affairs are so little known that it is difficult to judge what was or was not necessary in regard to the Zulus or the Boers, but general opinion decried Bartle Frere's Zulu War as unnecessary. The withdrawal of Indian troops to Malta caused a threatening movement by Russia upon Afghanistan, and Lytton retaliated by taking steps to establish English influence in that country, and so came the Afghan War.

The sensation of the South African War, apart from the later event of Majuba Hill, was the death of the Prince Imperial. It was his own fault from beginning

to end, for he was a wilful, masterful person. He insisted upon joining the English force that, by proving himself on the field, he might make himself acceptable to France; yet there were hints that one motive was said to be a love affair with a girl at Chislehurst. Popular report, however, insisted that there was an attachment between him and Princess Beatrice, and much sympathy was felt for her when the news came.

Though the Prince was only allowed to go as a spectator in the war area, he joined, in spite of remonstrance, in reconnaissance work, and further, when the little force was starting on the morning of the fatality, he insisted upon going away with half of it, refusing to wait for the others, who were late. In the afternoon, when Lieutenant Carey urged the necessity of returning, he refused to shorten his siesta, and so was caught. It was almost as though the gods intended his death. To his mother at Chislehurst it brought terrible sorrow, and no one showed her such sympathy and loving-kindness as Queen Victoria, who had learned through grief how to assuage grief. The latter wanted Parliament to put up a statue to him in Westminster, and even visited the Abbey to select a spot, persuading Gladstone, ever pliant to her in sentimental matters, to support the idea; but it was refused on the grounds of policy and nationality, so she had to withdraw the request, contenting herself with putting a memorial in St. George's Chapel.

These two wars were the death-knell to Beaconsfield's political life. The people were beginning to

tire of Jingoism, to feel a distrust of the Prime Minister's foreign policy, and there was an alarming deficit in finance, for glory had to be paid for. However, neither the Queen nor Beaconsfield scented danger, for the latter's love of show and power had run away with him. Without the inflexibility of Bismarck, he still further emulated that "blood and iron" statesman by declaring to his mistress that he desired to make her (poor little woman !) the Dictatress of Europe (and poor Europe !), writing, "Many things are preparing, which for the sake of peace and civilization render it most necessary that your Majesty should occupy that position."

"Who knows what dreams of domination these two gave themselves up to in the communion of their souls, this subjugated woman and this prodigious actor?"<sup>1</sup>

London still applauded the Prime Minister, the clubs entertaining him, and neither he nor the Queen looked for signs into the country or among those who felt the economic pinch. Her anger was still hot against Gladstone for his opposition to Beaconsfield. In the spring, when Arthur of Connaught was married to Princess Louise Margaret, third daughter of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, she offered the public affront to Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone of refusing to ask them to the wedding, though Beaconsfield himself urged it, and though Gladstone had again thrown his influence on her side in the matter of settlements. But she did more than this. Knowing that the Gladstones

<sup>1</sup> *La Reine Victoria.* By Abel Chevalley.

often visited the Wellesleys at the Deanery at Windsor, Victoria wrote to the Dean suggesting that, as Mr. Gladstone was making violent attacks on the Government, it would be as well to cause these visits to be discontinued. "Whereupon," said the stout old Dean, "I wrote her a tickler." Imagination boggles at the thought, says Mr. G. W. E. Russell, who tells the story.

In the autumn of 1879 Gladstone was invited to contest Midlothian, and he started at the end of November on that remarkable campaign which, for a man who a year before had congratulated himself if he walked a short distance in London without being insulted, whose very friends feared his eloquence and his energy, was a bewildering and enthusiastic progress through town after town, ever surrounded by cheering crowds. Beaconsfield called it the Pilgrimage of Passion.

Viscount Esher tells a story, which is hardly parliamentary, of George Hamilton attacking Gladstone in a public speech during this campaign. "And why did Mr. Gladstone do this, and why did he do the other? I will tell you why. Mr. Gladstone has an eye on the Treasury Bench." Upon this a man in the crowd cried out, "Yes, and if you don't look out he will have his b—m on it soon."

In his speeches Gladstone did not spare either the Prime Minister or the Government, and Victoria's indignation was intense, she declaring both in conversation and in letters that his attacks on her favourite were shameful and disgraceful. It is certain that,

had the case been reversed, she would have thought Beaconsfield justified in using the highest and lowest of his enormous range of rhetoric and invective against Gladstone. But with high hearts, still sure that the people must see with their eyes and look forward to a glorious future under their foreign policy, the Queen and Beaconsfield decided in March 1880 that the Government must go to the country; and Victoria went to visit Germany, to stay in the home of her dear lost daughter, in thorough confidence as to the result. But from the very first day of the elections it was evident that a tremendous reaction had set in, and when all was done the Liberals had a majority in England, Wales and Scotland of 119. Thus ended what Madame Blaze de Bury described as “the reign of the mad Caliph.”

Beaconsfield was staying at Hatfield alone, for Salisbury was abroad, and as the news rolled in upon him, hour by hour, he faced the ruins of his hopes as a great man, accepting with a seemingly undisturbed mind the conviction of his final downfall; and turned to the completing of his last novel, *Endymion*. He had reached to the very summit of honour, had refused a dukedom offered by his distressed queen, and felt that he had no time left in which to regret lost dreams. Lord Ronald Gower says that he gave himself two more years of life, and the Queen twenty. He also once remarked, “Bismarck and I were perfectly in accord. Had the late Government lasted we would have kept the democrats in Europe in check; but now all is over!” He did not realize that the very desire

to keep a living force in check had helped to bring about his own downfall.

Exactly a year later, on April 19, 1881, Beaconsfield died of gout and bronchitis, saying during his illness, "I would confess anything, if I were a Nihilist, under my torture." When he was dying one watching doctor said, "I think the old gentleman is gone at last," and Dizzy, humorous to the end, quietly remarked, "Not yet."

The Queen asked, and Gladstone offered, a public funeral, but the statesman had wished to lie by his wife. As had been her burial, so was his, the coffin being carried through the grounds of Hughenden to the churchyard; but the service was attended by many uninvited princes, ambassadors and country people.

Victoria, writing later in the year on the death of the Duchess of Westminster, said, "I don't understand the wish to be buried in a churchyard, but I know some vaults are gloomy and painful." She sent two wreaths for the grave, the one of immortelles inscribed, "With the true affection, respect and friendship of the Queen"; the other was a wreath of primroses, with a card bearing the words, "*His* favourite flower. Gathered at Osborne. A tribute of affection from Queen Victoria."

Only one person was ever designated in this way without a name by Victoria; to her the pronoun thus used could refer only to one, Prince Albert. But sentimentalists rushed to the idea that Beaconsfield had loved the lowly primrose, and they still dedicate

the flower to his memory. He was once asked—I forget by whom—if he liked the primrose, and replied, “Yes, in a salad.” On the other hand he is reported to have said, “I like to be in the country when the primroses are out.” That Beaconsfield, with his love of colour and gorgeousness, with his eyes always raised to the stars of fame, with his wild ambition to rule Europe, had the right sentiment to love a lowly yellow blossom is unthinkable. But to Prince Albert, deeply interested in wood and field, in life animate and inanimate, such a preference was natural. The Queen, seeing in the primrose cult a new agent in strengthening Conservatism, never declared what her sentence had meant.

However, some of us still smile over Primrose Day, but many sorrow over the devastation of field, hedge-row and coppice, over the bespoiled country and the children who seek and cannot find the yellow flowers after that murderous spring day has passed.

A week after the funeral two women clad in mourning entered the churchyard at Hughenden. The elder woman was Queen Victoria, and she went alone to Beaconsfield’s grave, where, weeping, she laid a wreath and a cross of white camellias—far better emblem of the dead man’s tastes—upon it. She then joined her daughter Beatrice and went to the Manor, resting awhile in his study. The following year she ordered a monument to be put in Hughenden Church, upon which was inscribed—

“To the dear and honoured memory of Benjamin, Earl of Beaconsfield, this memorial is raised by

his grateful and affectionate Sovereign and friend, Victoria, R.I. Kings love them that speaketh right."

Some of those who still thought of the Bulgarian atrocities made the reverse comment that "Queens love them that speaketh wrong." Beaconsfield's supporters were joyful over the evidence that the Queen was on their side, but a little later they found that she could be equally eulogistic about a quite different person.

The dreadful strain which had been put upon the loyalty of England for five years was over. If you read the remarkable essays already mentioned, which were written by H. Dunckley in the *Manchester Guardian* and signed "Verax," in 1878, it will be easier to understand how the whole constitution tottered under the combined actions of Victoria and Beaconsfield. As the Hon. G. W. E. Russell says in his *An Onlooker's Notebook*, "That the strain did not reach bursting-point was beyond all question due to the facts that the throne was occupied by a queen, and that the real leader of the militant Opposition was the man who of all others most ardently cherished the principle of chivalrous loyalty to the Crown."

Englishmen would never have borne from a king what they passed over as coming from a queen.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ANGER AND MORTIFICATION

"Perched as I am on a dreary, sad pinnacle of solitary grandeur."—*Queen Victoria, in a letter to Sir Theodore Martin.*

"The cause of the rising in the Sudan is the cause of all risings against Turkish rule, wherever they have occurred. No one who has been in a Turkish province and has witnessed the results of the Bashi-Bazouk system, which excited so much indignation some time ago in Bulgaria, will need to be told why the people of the Sudan have risen in revolt against the Khedive. The Turks, the Circassians, and the Bashi-Bazouks have plundered and oppressed the people in the Sudan as they plundered and oppressed them in the Balkan peninsula. . . . That the people were justified in rebelling, nobody who knows the treatment to which they were subjected will attempt to deny. . . . It is a mistake to regard the Mahdi as in any sense a religious leader; he personified popular discontent. . . . The movement is not religious, but an outbreak of despair."—*Letter by General Gordon, included in 'Events in the Life of Charles G. Gordon,' by H. W. Gordon.*

WITH the fall and death of Disraeli the Queen lost far more than a friend; she lost her dreams, her ambition, her feeling of security and her happiness. When Gladstone was in power his aim was to consolidate Britain from within; when Beaconsfield was in power his desire was to extend the empire outwards. The former went straight at his mark of renovating outworn laws and customs, raising the standard of the people and reforming abuses; the latter spoke softly to his Queen, pointed to her colonies and whispered that they

spread over the earth, that the tie which must bind them to England would be neither Parliament nor blood, but the Empress-Queen. Beaconsfield raised dreams of world-wide dominance which would have done justice to a Hohenzollern ; he bred in her mind an appreciation of war, and tutored her in believing that aggrandisement justified war ; he kept the people in a constant state of surprise, cast over them the glamour of a spirited foreign policy, and presented them with finely coloured dramatic pictures, such as Peace with Honour, and Imperialism, and, by diverting their minds, laid to rest for the moment republican sentiments. Under his adroit management Victoria came more among her people—in face of Gladstone's straightforward arguments she drew back into her seclusion. She refused to open Gladstone's Parliaments, but for Beaconsfield she was present at least every other year. When Prince Leopold came of age, Dizzy asked for him £15,000 a year with a flourish of trumpets. Leopold was a sage, an intellectual of the rarest merit; he was like his great father who had “given a new impulse to the course of civilization” ; and the pension was granted with few dissentients. When the Duke of Connaught married and wanted his income increased the request was quietly acceded to, for there was a rumour that he was to be made Viceroy of Ireland, so that there was no Irish opposition. But when Leopold, who was created by the Queen, in May 1881, Duke of Albany—a sinister title, for all the royal dukes of that name had died young or been murdered!—asked the usual increase in March 1882, on his marriage with Helene of

Waldeck-Pyrmont, there was strong opposition. Irish hopes had not been fulfilled by the Connaughts, and Irish affairs were in a desperate condition, so forty-two, mostly Irish patriots, voted against the royal wishes, and Labouchere again raised the question of what became of the Civil List money not spent by the Crown. Gladstone, as usual, defended the Queen, but admitted that she took private possession of the money saved by her economies on the Civil List. However, in a House of 387 the majority was 345. The fact remained that under Gladstone these discussions arose.

When Beaconsfield had decided to go to the country in 1880 he cast about for a cry which might be popular, and pitched upon Anti-Home Rule. These words had come into use long before, Gladstone saying in 1871, "I am not quite certain what is meant by Home Rule." At the moment of the dissolution, however, there was no demand for it, as Ireland had suffered from bad potato harvests and was on the verge of starvation; Parnell, already a personage, had his hands full in devising means of safeguarding the Irish, and gave the somewhat natural advice that they should save money as much as possible, and pay as little rent as possible, so that when the deadliest pinch came food could still be bought. This alienated both Liberal and Tory, for the sacredness of property over life was even more pronounced then than now. Thus the anti-Home Rule cry interested no one and had no influence on the election; the people were too occupied with their sudden fear of the two recent costly wars of aggrandisement, with the suspicion that a "spirited foreign policy" was

not worth paying for, and their sudden reaction in favour of Gladstone, to whom they turned with expectation.

Six years earlier he had resigned the leadership of the Opposition to Lord Granville, a member of the Upper House, and the Liberals had chosen Lord Hartington to lead them in the Commons. Thus Granville was the responsible person. Beaconsfield, however, thought that Hartington would interfere least with his line of policy, and advised Victoria to send for him, which she did. Gladstone had naturally said that he would not take office under any one, and neither Granville nor Hartington had any fancy to have Gladstone thundering over their heads from a back bench, and putting them right. So when Hartington had his interview with the Queen, whose face he could only see imperfectly, as she stood with her back to the window, he told her that Gladstone was the only man who could form a Government and that his Government would be more moderate than any he himself could get together. The Queen implored him to do her wishes, appealing to him as responsible leader of the Party, and continued to do so in answer to all he said. She then asked if he was sure Mr. Gladstone would not serve under him.

"I can't say I am sure he wouldn't, ma'am, for I've never ventured to ask him."

"Now I beg you will ask him and come back and let me know what he says."

The next day Hartington and Granville went to Windsor, and both said it was impossible for either to

become leader while Gladstone was at hand, and so they were sent back to summon Gladstone. The Queen was quite courteous to him, but seemed "natural under effort, and the interview ended pleasantly," at least on the surface.

Beaconsfield blamed Hartington bitterly for not taking the first office, saying that he showed a want of courage, and "abandoned a woman in her hour of need," and he moaned, "All becomes chaos, all becomes chaos when I am away."

Victoria took leave of him that April of 1880 as though all peace had left her, and offered to confer on him a dukedom, which he declined. She felt that her prospects of world-domination were gone, that there would be no more wars of expansion, that once again the wearisome and, from her point of view, dangerous policy of internal reform would replace those glorious dreams. So she looked about for a means of counteracting what she regarded as the coming retrograde policy, and she turned to the Army, determined to impress upon it her position as true commander-in chief. She was sure that misfortune would befall this beloved section of her subjects, that the Liberals wanted to reduce it in numbers and in power, and her fear was heightened by the inclusion of Joseph Chamberlain, popularly regarded as a Socialist, in the Cabinet. He and Dilke were known as the Parliament of Two, because they were inseparable, and each refused office unless the other had some responsible post. "You may make your choice," said Sir Charles Dilke to Gladstone, "the other shall be leader of the Radicals."

When her Majesty saw Gladstone she was keen on knowing who was suggested for the War Office, and evidently disapproved on hearing the name of Childers, who in the earlier Liberal administration had been at the Admiralty. So the Queen wooed the Army. On July 13, 1880, she reviewed 11,000 Volunteers in Hyde Park; on the 28th the colours of the 24th Regiment, lost at Isandhlwana but afterwards recovered, were taken to her at Osborne, and in the presence of the officers she decorated them with a wreath. Before the first battalion of the Rifle Brigade started for India, August 21, she visited it on board the troopship *Jumna*, inspected their quarters and was solicitous for their comfort. In 1881 she held a review in Queen's Park, Edinburgh, of 40,000 Scottish Volunteers under difficult circumstances, for the rain descended in torrents; she, however, remained to the end, and for three hours let the rain pelt upon her, so that by the time she got back to Holyrood her carriage contained a pool of water, and streams of it ran off her skirt.

She kept a watchful eye over Childers, disapproving every suggested reform, and setting herself strongly against all reorganization. In her fear of change she identified herself with all that had been, standing up for old abuses; as Sir Sidney Lee says, "No military reform escaped her censorious vigilance." She even went so far as to disapprove of the abolition of the use of the "cat" as a punishment. This abuse had gradually diminished, but an officer could still order fifty lashes with the cat to be inflicted on the bare back, and scandals arose in the case of bad-tempered officers. Part of her letter ran: The Queen hopes

"that officers on service may not be deprived of the only power they possess of keeping young troops in order, viz. by inflicting corporal punishment in the extreme cases of cowardice, treachery, plundering, or neglect of duty on sentry. The Queen hates the system of flogging, but sees no alternative in extreme cases on active service."

The punishment was, however, abolished in 1881.

We are wiser about punishment in this generation, though it is only a few months since that Lord Charles Beresford sought to glorify this brutalization of men.

When it was desired to abolish the abuse of distributing Army rank and pay as rewards to those whose qualifications were invisible, Victoria strongly opposed it, saying that if there were abuses they could easily be remedied. A case in point was that of a General Macdonald, who had never done military duty as a general, but had for many years been private secretary to the Duke of Cambridge. To his honours had been added the title and pay—to the amount of £1000 a year—of honorary colonel, and a question was asked in the House of Commons about it. The Queen, then at Balmoral, wrote Childers a long letter demanding that he would not pledge himself to any reform in this matter, saying that she was strongly opposed to the abolition of those honorary colonelcies, that to abolish them would be to destroy all *esprit de corps* and to weaken the pride which the officers feel in the regiments. How could she have attained to such a conclusion, seeing the facts of the case? What *esprit de corps*

could there be between a regiment and an honorary colonel who was in reality a secretary?

There was delay in posting this letter, so her Majesty telegraphed in cipher to the War Minister. The telegram arrived too late, the question having been asked and answered; but Childers wrote to her, saying that, had he received it in time, his answer would have been more vague. Yet we are often told that the Queen did not influence the Government.

When in the winter of that year Childers prepared a scheme for linking battalions and associating the names of counties or towns with regiments, he again found himself faced with an annoyed and forbidding Queen.

The plan was pushed through, however, and resulted in an immediate accession of recruits; and Childers, driven to desperation by the unceasing and unintelligent heckling both in Parliament and from the Throne, put his position plainly before the country in a speech at Pontefract, on January 19, 1882. It was a justification of the British constitutional attitude as against the German claim that the monarch is in absolute command of the Army. To such men as Gladstone and Childers, strong, self-assertive and determined, the English people owe a great debt of gratitude for the saving of our army from relapsing into an inefficient body, given over to obsolete custom and ruled by those whose only claim was that of high descent.

In the course of the speech referred to Childers said: "It is said that the Secretaries of State for War are encroaching on the functions of others. The

Army, they say, is the army of the Crown; we Secretaries of State want to make it the army of the Commons. The Crown, they say, commands the Army through the commander-in-chief; the Secretary of State is a mere financial officer who has gradually intruded on the province of the Crown. All this is mere delusion. The Queen is the head of the Army, the head of the Navy and of every branch of the public service; as such she can do no wrong. But that is because all her acts are the acts of her responsible ministers. The doctrine of personal government which you have seen so undisguisedly claimed in Prussia is absolutely unknown in our Constitution. . . . Under the Secretary of State are three departments, the heads of which are equally responsible to him. The Chief Officer Commanding, for the Military Department; the Surveyor-General, for the Ordnance and Supply Department; and the Financial Secretary for the Finance Department. To say that the Secretary of State has no controlling power in such matters, when he is responsible to Parliament for any improper exercise of the Queen's prerogative in regard to them, is manifestly absurd."

The Queen's greatest anxiety at the beginning of the new Government was that it should carry on the same foreign policy as its forerunner; especially that it should bring to a close in a glorious manner the two wars. A great majority, however, clamoured for the recall of Sir Bartle Frere, and every one was dumb with surprise to find Gladstone deciding to retain him at his post. There were two reasons for this: the one

he gave was that steps to confederation were being taken, and Frere must stay to complete the scheme. The second reason—which he did not give—was that Victoria did not cease to urge upon him her confidence in the commander, and her desire for what she regarded as a strong policy. The enemy by this time were no longer Zulus, but Boers. The royal chagrin was bitter when Frere was recalled in July, and still more bitter when, after many vicissitudes, a peace was concluded the following year without its being secured at the point of the sword.

Over Afghanistan her distress was even keener, for the decision of the Government was to return to the original Anglo-Indian policy which had been found successful before the war. So Lord Roberts' brave march to Kabul, and thence to the relief of the British at Kandahar, was followed by the appointment of a new Amir and the evacuation of the country by the British, a policy which has so far proved a good one.

This withdrawing after such a desperate attempt to annex Afghanistan to India was a terrible grievance to Victoria, and she refused to discuss it with her ministers. Lord Hartington said, after an interview in October 1880, that she was very gracious, but avoided talking about Kandahar with him, and he feared she was getting into the habit of refusing to talk over with her ministers any subject which was unpalatable to her. Lord Esher commented upon this that there was probably some wisdom in it, as she knew that she or the Ministry must give way, and that she had no chance against a united Cabinet.

When the decision was carried into effect Victoria could not bring herself to face it squarely, and absolutely refused to allow her ministers to publish the matter, which threw them into an awkward predicament in January 1881, when the Queen's Speech was being prepared. The country had a right to know so important an event, and to let it leak out through report rather than in the legitimate way was sufficient to discredit any Parliament. On Gladstone including in the speech that Kandahar had been evacuated, she telegraphed from Osborne that she strongly objected to it; her ministers replied that four months had elapsed since the withdrawal, and it was absolutely necessary to announce the fact now; to which she returned that she would agree to a modified form of words which did *not* announce our withdrawal.

Hartington and Gladstone did not know what to do; should they go to Osborne and see what could be done with this autocratic personage, or should they further prorogue Parliament until she had the courage to face the universal knowledge? At that very hour a Privy Council was being held at Osborne, and Sir Henry Ponsonby declared that he had never seen her Majesty so angry as she was then. Possibly the Privy Councillors, met to discuss the speech, helped to cause this anger, and also helped to induce a more reasonable frame of mind, for at six o'clock a telegram was put into Gladstone's hands giving assent.

With Gladstone's Government came trouble in Egypt. When England acquired a monetary interest in that country it was necessary to have some control

over Egyptian finance, which Beaconsfield had found in a bankrupt condition. French influence had for long been strong in the country, and in 1879 the Dual Control of Finance (England and France) had been instituted. But Turkey was bankrupt in her influence also, having ruled with her usual injustice and barbarity, so the whole great land of Egypt and the Sudan was ripe for rebellion. The army under Arabi Pasha started the revolution, and England's lack of real knowledge of the country caused this to be regarded as a mere military revolt. There was a massacre at Alexandria, and when Britain prepared to restore order by bombarding the town, the French fleet refused to act with it and steamed away. Gladstone declared that the Sultan must see after his own possessions. France suggested a European Conference, and the Sultan of Turkey, fearing that he would get short shrift at the hands of Europe, and regarding England as his friend through thick and thin, always ready to pull his chestnuts out of the fire for him, refused to have anything to do with a Conference and made the offer to England that it should take exclusive control of Egyptian administrative affairs. Gladstone and Granville, horrified at the idea that they were to spend valuable time, money and men in reducing a Turkish province to order for Turkey, refused pointblank and without consulting their Cabinet. The very thought must have been horrible to Gladstone.

It is easy to see how this high-handed action provoked the Queen, who was so willing to favour Turkey, and who, imbued with the Beaconsfieldian policy of

Empire extension, would have taken all that was offered, at whatever cost, in the hope that it would lead to more. So there was a sharp disagreement between her and Gladstone at the very outset, a disagreement which widened and deepened over Egypt until Victoria regarded Gladstone much as he looked upon the Sultan, as "the greatest murderer in Europe."

The Queen did not cease to press the policy of her late minister upon her new Cabinet, and she endured mental tortures for fear that her efforts would be of no avail. She turned again to the Army, demanding that the smallest details should be submitted to her, for she distrusted Childers, especially now that it was necessary to put down Arabi Pasha before anything else could be thought of. A commander-in-chief of the expedition had to be chosen, and she refused to sanction any appointment until she had diligently studied the careers and qualities of all her chief soldiers, eventually agreeing to the Cabinet's choice of Lord Wolseley. She worried over transports, rations, hospitals, equipments; she wrote and telegraphed incessantly to the War Office, sending one day as many as seventeen letters! in fact, she did not cease to inform her already harassed and hard-working servants that they knew nothing of their work, and must be given her unsleeping surveillance.

It is needless to say that Childers was loyalty itself, but it would have been interesting on the seventeen-letter day to have heard his language, say at the tenth letter. After that his sensibilities must have become

blunted, and his overcharged feelings too congested for expression.

In all this getting ready what had become of her Majesty's deputy, her cousin the Duke of Cambridge, that she did the overlooking herself? She had evidently come to regard him as an inefficient screen between her and her Ministry, and indeed he never had been strong. Like so many military and royal Germans, his mind was burdened with straps and buckles and lace. The present Kaiser has always been keen over these things, spending earnest thought and much talk over the relative importance of two, or three, buttons on some part of a uniform, as to whether a strap should be four inches or four and a half inches long, and such stupendous trifles. Like his father, the Duke of Cambridge was noted for talking loudly in public places, and was far more audible often at the theatre than were the actors; and like many men who have been stay-at-home soldiers, his ideas upon military matters were somewhat hazy. He loyally upheld his royal cousin in holding fast to ancient custom, and when, after the lesson taught during this first Egyptian campaign, it was suggested and pressed that the betraying scarlet uniform should be abolished, he offered what some outspoken person called "a senseless opposition"; saying that he thought it good for the soldier in action that he should be visible to the enemy. He was, with equal reason, totally against raising the standard of age to nineteen.

Victoria had insisted that her son, the Duke of Connaught, should lead the Guards' Brigade, and that

the Duke of Teck should have a responsible post on Wolseley's staff, so in addition to the constant fussing over everything that had any relation to the war, the Queen was also anxious about her son. "My nerves were strained to such a pitch by the intensity of my anxiety and suspense that they seemed to feel as though they were all alive."

Tel-el-Kebir was fought and won, and her Majesty celebrated it as she had years before celebrated the fall of Sebastopol, with a bonfire on the top of Craig Gowan and many other rejoicings, writing in her journal—

"Felt unbounded joy and gratitude for God's great goodness and mercy."

It was natural that she should say and think this—but now, since the beginning of the Great War, it is only possible to feel that to join the name of the Christian's God with war at all is a blasphemy. Kaiser William has shown us that the only god of War is a revolting devil.

When the Egyptian Campaign was over Queen Victoria rewarded her three relatives for their share in it, the Duke of Cambridge being appointed personal aide-de-camp to herself, which, as his work had been entirely hidden by her Majesty's own industry, was, as some paper wrote, "like decorating the King of the Unknown Regions for his share in the Transit of Venus. Practically he did as much in the one event as in the other." A comic paper stated that while our troops were winning Tel-el-Kebir, the Duke, "aware somehow of fighting, rose two hours earlier than usual,

shouldered his umbrella, charged an imaginary enemy at the head of imaginary troops and fell with an imaginary bullet in his shoulder." The Duke had been accused of going on parade on a wet day with his umbrella up, and so that useful domestic article was never forgotten when any story was to be told against him. Thus the next year, when the trooping of the colours was countermanded by him because of the rain, the comment was, "The troops were ready, the public were waiting, but all were told to go home. Was a certain historical umbrella necessary?"

The Duke of Connaught had been mentioned three times in dispatches, was given the C.B., and received the thanks of Parliament. Yet a sceptical public had much to say over a report that he had been well guarded, that by order of a "high personage his troops had been so arranged at the battle as to prevent him from incurring danger." This naturally caused lively indignation in royal circles, and both Wolseley and Childers emphatically denied its truth, the former saying, "He took his chance like any one else." But the public were not convinced, and there was some excuse for this when one remembers the question addressed to Lieutenant Carey after the killing of the Prince Imperial—

"Where is the Prince?"

"Dead, sir."

"Then why are you alive?"

This was sufficient to destroy reliance on the word of a superior officer on any such matters, for people naturally felt that such would protect his own reputa-

tion by putting such a precious charge as a royal prince in a safe corner.

Victoria also thoughtfully devised the decoration of the Royal Red Cross for nurses who had shown great service, which was bestowed upon four nurses, also upon Princess Louise, the Duchess of Albany and Princess Frederica of Hanover for their services in the First-Aid Society for sick and wounded soldiers. She distributed medals and reviewed the returned troops. Her keen desire was for the drastic punishment of Arabi and the other principal rebels. "The whole state of Egypt is full of difficulties, and we must take great care that, short of annexation, our position is firmly established there, and that we shall not have to shed precious blood and expend much money for nothing," was one of her exhortations.

Arabi Pasha was a rebel against the unutterable cruelty of the Turks; his movement "was in essence, a genuine revolt against misgovernment" and "was not essentially anti-European," said Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer). He had headed a national movement against a foreign oppressor, and the Government could not force itself to carrying out the extreme measures urged by Victoria. He was brought to trial and condemned to death by the Egyptian Government, but Lord Dufferin, preventing the carrying out of the capital sentence, sent him to Ceylon, whence he returned after some years and died in Egypt.

Gladstone felt a great repugnance against burdening the country with any aggressive policy in Egypt; yet it was evident that peace in Egypt could only be

secured by the retention of a British force there. Lord Dufferin recommended the formation of a native force of about 6000 men with a proportion of British officers, and a semi-military gendarmerie of 4,400 men. Evelyn Wood became Sirdar of the former and Valentine Baker was made Inspector-General of the latter, the intention being to train native soldiers to do Egyptian work for Egypt, and that England should gradually evacuate a country to which its only right was the desire of the Sultan to shift his burdens upon her shoulders. The Queen strongly resented the idea of evacuation, but could do nothing.

The revolt of the Arabs, however, continued; it had but moved its location from Egypt to the Sudan. The tribes in that vast region were regarded simply as a slave nursery by Turkey and as material for taxation. The people, forced to grow corn for their oppressors, died of starvation themselves. Thus, when the Mahdi came to the front as their deliverer, he at once secured an enormous army. The Khedive now wanted England to extend her assistance and reconquer the Sudan for him. Evelyn Baring advised against it; the Government saw no reason for saddling England with such a burden, but Victoria, dreaming of an African empire as large as that of India, did not cease to urge the sending out of armies.

In January 1883 an Englishman, Hicks Pasha, had been dispatched by the Egyptian authorities, entirely against his own military judgment, with 10,000 Egyptian troops against the Mahdi, and the army had been practically annihilated, upon which our Govern-

ment proposed sending a Governor-General, meaning Charles Gordon, "which, if it had been accepted, would have saved the Sudan from anarchy and rebellion, and England from expense in life and money, but the Egyptian Government declined his services."<sup>1</sup>

At this time over the millions of miles of the Sudan the tribes roamed at will, but there were some small towns, more or less fortified, in which were located forces of Egyptian soldiers and some Europeans who had gone there for trading or other purposes; and, as in 1874 and 1878, Gordon had been Governor-General under the Egyptian Government of some of the provinces, he was more liked by the Arabs than by the Turks.

The Government felt that their evacuation plan was the best that could be devised, but first the isolated garrisons must be extricated, and, in spite of Egypt's refusal of Gordon, they asked him if he could do this work. During those two years and after it was quite easy to allocate blame, to fasten it, as the Queen did, upon one man, but it is time now that the matter should at least be studied from both sides and not from party feeling, or personal prejudice. Gordon knew the Sudan as intimately—and the intimacy was of the slenderest—as such a huge country could be known at that time, and when at twenty-four hours' notice he started from England on his mission, in January 1884, he said—

"The Mahdi's forces will fall to pieces of themselves!"

<sup>1</sup> *Events in the Life of Charles G. Gordon.* By H. W. Gordon.

The cause of all the trouble was the want of knowledge on all sides. The Sudan with its heat and cold, its floods and droughts, was an unknown country; the Arab and other forces, the influence of the Mahdi, the aims of the fighters, the character of Gordon himself, all were unknown; even Gordon could not diagnose the case. He himself was not in the slightest understood by the men who sent him. They knew that he had been successful before, that he had an influence in the Sudan, and that every one said he was the man; as far as they could tell he was. Later they knew he was not. Energetic, upright, religious, he was yet subject to enthusiasms which blinded his judgment, he naturally trusted the people about him, and he acted upon his instincts rather than upon reason.

I remember well the terrible excitement about his fate, the bitter denunciations, the unjust charges, but those who knew him best thought afterwards that he was sent too late for his powers to cope with the situation. Here is one example of his want of stability of idea. In an interview given, just before starting, to a representative of *The Pall Mall Gazette* he said—

“There is one subject on which I cannot imagine any one can differ. This is the impolicy of announcing our intention to evacuate Khartoum. Even if we were bound to do so we should have said nothing about it. The moment it is known that we have given up the game every man will go over to the Mahdi. All men worship the rising sun. . . . The difficulties of evacuation will be enormously increased, if indeed the withdrawal of our garrison is not rendered impossible.”

No sooner, however, was he in the midst of the disturbed country than he repudiated this by calling the authorities together at Berber on February 13th, announced to them the intention of abandoning the Sudan, and followed this by drawing up a proclamation appointing six of the most influential men to administer the government of the province, subject to the Governor-General. The whole of the notables present at the meeting threw their interest on the side of the Mahdi as opportunity arose.

Gordon's one mission was to bring the garrisons away, yet no sooner was he in Egypt than he added to this programme the intention of forming a provisional Government for the Sudan, and stuck to this to the end, refusing to leave Khartoum until this impossible task was accomplished.

In his earlier period of authority Gordon had earned the hatred of a man named Zobeir, by putting down a revolt, thus causing the execution of Zobeir's son and the loss of property to him. On reaching Egypt this time he met Zobeir, and for fear of complications asked the Egyptian Government to send the old rebel to Cyprus out of the way. This was refused, and Gordon thought the safest plan would then be to take Zobeir to Khartoum with him. Those, however, who saw the hatred in the Arab's eyes, judged that such a course would mean the death of one of the two men, and Zobeir was kept in Cairo. Gordon must have known that Zobeir was a man of power, the man to lead his countrymen, and later urgently begged the English Government to send him out to Khartoum as

Governor-General. The Egyptian government supported this, but our Cabinet, wanting Gordon to confine himself to his mission, and knowing Zobeir to be a great slave-dealer, refused.

Thus Gordon, by changing his policy, and the English ministers, by not changing theirs, each contributed to the final result.

The revealing of his hand shut the Sudan to Gordon, and a little more than a month after his arrival in Khartoum the tribes all around had joined the Mahdi. He had in the first weeks sent away 2,500 people, but he still had with him nearly 10,000 troops, there being left in the town at the end about 4000 Bashi-Bazouks, nearly 3000 irregulars, and many black soldiers.

In April 1884 there was a strong desire to send a relief expedition out, and Gladstone was in favour of sending cavalry to Berber to ensure Gordon's safety, but the Cabinet decided against it.

Great pressure was put on the Government by the Queen, by the Opposition and by the people, until at last an expedition was decided upon. Then was fought "the battle of the routes," when the generals sat in council in London and squabbled with unabated tenacity for month after month whether the force should go up the Nile or through the desert, so it was August before a start was made, and at long last the passage up the Nile began.

In Gordon's Journal there are many curious passages about the expedition. In September he wrote : "I think I can say truly that I never asked for a British expedition." In October he asked what it was

coming out for, saying he could not understand it. If it was for the purpose of relieving him he deprecated it; he could get away at any time, adding that if it did reach Khartoum he would not go away with it unless he could take the whole garrison with him. "No one can judge of the waste of money and expense of life in the present expedition; it is an utter waste of both, but it is due to the indecision of the Government." "If the Europeans like to go to the Equator I will give them steamers, but I will not leave these people after all they have gone through." "I decline to agree that the expedition comes for my relief; it comes for the relief of the garrisons, which I failed to accomplish. I expect her Majesty's Government are in a precious rage with me for holding out and forcing their hand."

He frequently gave the people in Khartoum permission to join the Mahdi, and gradually about 20,000 drifted away, leaving 14,000 in all in the town.

For six months the Mahdi's army was stationed around them waiting, and the garrison's food was getting very low. But when Gordon knew that the British force was nearing him he ordered that the greater part of it should be sent to Berber, and thus it was a comparatively small number which at last got to Khartoum. What Gordon knew the Mahdi knew, and two days before the arrival of the British, the latter judged that it was time to strike. By treachery or by attack his troops entered the town and Gordon was shot.

"Too late!" screamed every one as they turned to

rend the Government and in especial to rend Gladstone. But late was not really the word. Had the expedition arrived months earlier the result would probably have been the same, and in no case could the relief column have carried sufficient food to help the garrison to march away. There were so many "ifs" in the whole matter, and applicable no less to Gordon himself than to the English Government and the English generals.

Gordon's temperament appealed to the public, and, combined with his religion, his championship of a forlorn hope and his long resistance of the wild desert forces, enshrined him in the national imagination as a hero and a martyr. It was a time of emotion, not of thought, and even now the generation of that day will refuse to recognize anything but the emotional aspect.

Of all the Queen gave way most unrestrainedly to her emotions. Her first act was to send a telegram to Gladstone and Lord Hartington, not in cypher as usual but in plain English—a small and unworthy act—blaming them entirely for what had happened, saying that it was too fearful to realize that the fall of Khartoum might have been prevented and many precious lives saved if they had taken earlier action. She put the whole burden on her Prime Minister's shoulders, and saw in him nothing less than a murderer.

She wrote also to Miss Gordon, the general's sister, a letter filled with regret, grief, anger and extravagance. "*How shall I write to you or how shall I attempt to express what I feel?* To *think* of your dear, noble, heroic brother, who served his country and his

Queen so truly, so heroically, with a self-sacrifice so edifying to the world, to think that he was not saved ! That the promises of help were not kept—promises of which I *so often* and *so constantly* reminded those who should have fulfilled them ; ah ! it is to me *grief* inexpressible. Indeed it has made me ill. . . . Would you express to your other sisters and your elder brother my true sympathy, and what I do so keenly feel—the *stain* left upon England for your dear brother's cruel, though heroic fate."

Miss Gordon sent her brother's Bible as a present to the Queen, and in July sent his diary for her Majesty's perusal. The reading of it, with the curious evidence it gives of the writer's character, his changeability and obstinacy, in no way modified her admiration for him, and she wrote again of her mortification at the vacillation of her ministers.

Henry Gordon, at the end of his book, "*Events in the Life of Charles G. Gordon*," put the chief blame on the refusal of the Egyptian Government to accept General Gordon's help when the British Government offered it in 1883, saying that in that case Gordon would have been in Khartoum by the new year, and have easily then have brought the whole garrison away. But who knows ? Charles Gordon might have refused then, as later, to bring any one away until he had carried out his impossible scheme of political reorganization.

Germany's ruler, Bismarck, greatly enjoyed the contemplation of our trouble, and started one of his periodic attempts to excite German feeling against England,

employing Busch, whose greatest joy was in licking the Chancellor-Emperor's boots, to write articles for the German papers—notably the *Grenzboten*—showing England to be guilty of great crimes. One article dealt with Protection, another with England and China, declaring that by restrictive legislation England had caused famine and cholera in India and was responsible for cholera in West Africa and Europe. England and the Boers, England and Russia were the themes of other of these articles. Busch tells how he and Bucher—one of like kidney—rejoiced together over England's misfortunes in the Sudan, and the latter expressed the hope that Wolseley's head would soon arrive in Cairo nicely pickled and packed! He also explains how the Sultan's refusal to see after his own possessions was influenced by threats from Germany.

The crisis in the Sudan was not concluded by the tragedy of Khartoum; that had to be followed by a decision either to destroy the Mahdi or to evacuate the Sudan altogether. The latter alternative was decided upon, and in April Gladstone wrote to the Queen, who was then abroad, and she replied with a vehement protest against the decision, saying that it would affect our position in India, and demanding that Wolseley and our political representative in Egypt, Evelyn Baring (since Lord Cromer) should have an absolutely free hand to do what they thought. To her first objection it could only be pointed out that India alone demanded the policy decided upon, for Russia, believing Britain fully occupied in the Sudan, was again attacking Afghanistan; and the second was

answered by Baring sending a spontaneous recommendation that the Sudan be abandoned.

When Britain's need was defence, the Government was quick enough to act, and in the Afghan quarrel steps were at once taken which considerably helped the settlement of the matter by negotiation.

## CHAPTER XVII

### “JOHN BROWN’S BODY”

“That terrible struggle for life in the lonely plantation near the Fisheries.”—*Daily Paper*.

“The Prince, become King, had the statue removed before he even saw his castle; the ‘mansion’ he bought from the servant’s heirs, and dedicated it to his own use. So did all trace of the favourite disappear from Balmoral.”—*Contemporary Note*.

I HAVE no intention of dealing with Irish affairs—they were too engrossing, too complicated and too immense; but in 1880 began a cycle of distress, rebellion, agrarian crime and coercion. Fenianism was again rampant, and great anxiety was felt over the royal journey from Scotland to Windsor in the autumn of 1880. For three or four years the world seemed to suffer from madness—as it does suffer occasionally—and Ireland was mad, only with more cause than the rest of the globe. The assassinations, the incipient revolts which underlay them, and the insecurity which the Queen felt under the rule of Gladstone (believing as she did that under him revolution was encouraged), all combined to produce a condition of nervousness on Victoria’s mind which each new blow increased.

In March 1881 the Tsar of Russia was killed by a bomb, the lower part of his body being blown away;

in the summer President Garfield was shot, and in March 1882, as Victoria was walking from the train at Windsor to her carriage, a crazy youth, named Robert McLean, fired a Colt's revolver at her from a distance of a few yards, an Eton boy saving her by beating up McLean's arm with an umbrella. Other Etonians who were near tried to lynch him. Fortunately no one was hit, though, for the first time in the history of the many bogus attempts at assassination of our Queen, there was proof that the revolver was loaded.

Victoria, with her usual courage under such events, drove on to the castle, and wired reassuringly to Marlborough House. McLean, a clerk out of employment, was tried at Reading, and, being found to be insane, was detained for life.

In May of the same year news of a dreadful Irish tragedy came at the end of a day on which the seal had been set on the accomplishment of a good deed. There had been revelations of abuses in the city, and the Government had talked of reforming the City Corporation; so, as a sop to Cerberus, Epping Forest was set in order and presented to the public by the City fathers, and on May 6 her Majesty went in semi-state to declare it duly open.

A noted journalist gives the following account of the occasion and of the news which followed hard upon it—

“It was a day of bright sunshine as Queen Victoria drove from Chingford to High Beach to declare Epping Forest open for the use of the people for

all time. . . . We were quietly snatching a hasty lunch in a marquee beside the daïs. . . . Suddenly, a few minutes before the expected time, a blare of trumpets announced the Queen’s approach. Ministers and Pressmen alike were on the alert; Lord Granville, one of the most homely of Secretaries of State, not only filled his mouth with part of a sandwich he was eating, but carried the rest on to the platform. The happy chronicle of the royal rejoicings in Epping Forest, which closed with one of Messrs. Brock’s matchless firework displays, had scarcely been completed when there came ‘Terrible News from Ireland.’ The assassination under such savage circumstances of Lord Frederick Cavendish and his under-secretary, Mr. Burke, was clearly and correctly reported. This fact is emphasized on account of its having been so often stated that the London public heard nothing of the diabolical occurrence until Monday morning. Not only was the news given, but in some comments I said, ‘The crime shatters at a blow Mr. Gladstone’s hope of pursuing a gentle policy.’”<sup>1</sup>

Ireland was, indeed, badly served by her revolutionaries, and she knew it. When the words of Lady Frederick Cavendish—surely one of the noblest of women—to Mr. Gladstone, “You did right to send him to Ireland, Uncle William,” were told by a priest from the altar of a chapel in Connemara Road, Dublin, the whole congregation spontaneously fell down on their knees. Parnell offered to resign his seat immediately, but Gladstone would not allow it, rightly

<sup>1</sup> *My Life’s Pilgrimage.* By Thomas Catling.

regarding the Irish leader as the last restraining influence upon the Fenians.

The very month that this took place a tatterdemalion named Albert Young was sentenced to imprisonment for openly threatening the death of Queen Victoria and Prince Leopold. The Queen was a very brave woman, but this succession of horrible events made her soul quail. She believed in the strong arm—no talking, little thinking; if you are hit, no matter how or why, hit back as hard as you can. Gladstone's appeal to justice and reason were to her but signs of weakness; she never owned herself wrong, and that he had owned England wrong in Africa and Afghanistan enraged her; that he had tried to meet Irish desperation by conceding reforms, by treatment rather than by force, woke her scorn, and she blamed him for the deep unrest which had produced these Irish murders by members of a secret society who did not even know whom they were killing, that they were English gentlemen being sufficient excuse.

Under Disraeli's Government her Majesty had felt buoyant, hopeful, young again; now a black atmosphere of treachery and murder surrounded her. She refused each year through this Government to be present at the opening of Parliament. In 1883 she was at Windsor, and that she would not come even that short distance aroused indignation in some quarters: "To be at Windsor and yet to refuse to run up to town is as good as saying, 'My faithful Lords and Commons, you can get on very well without me, and I don't care to see you. Do your duty, but

don’t bother me while I am looking after the youngest of the many grandchildren whom you will have to provide for some day.’” Such was one contemporary comment.

One of the causes of this recrudescence of public irritation was that, Gladstone having been very ill, the Liberals, jealous for the honour of the minister, noted that there was no hint of “kind inquiries” by the Queen, and they recalled the anxious assiduity with which Beaconsfield’s bedside had been attended : “At the time when the Court was required to go into mourning for an unknown German, it was a question whether Gladstone would be well enough ever to handle again the ribbons of State.”

There was, however, a difference of degree in the illnesses as well as in her Majesty’s solicitude. As a matter of fact, she was duly informed of her Prime Minister’s state, though she made no inquiries, and, seeing happy possibility before her, she seized upon it by causing Ponsonby to write and urge Gladstone to retire from the greater part of his active work and become a peer. But there were some reforms that the Prime Minister still wished to make, and he politely refused the distinguished offer of superannuation, a refusal which damped Victoria’s sympathies.

Victorian Court mourning was a wonderful and intricate invention, for it had been elevated—I cannot say to a fine art, for there was nothing artistic about it; but if I say an exact science—though there are those who will scoff—it best describes it. The death of a cousin of the last recognizable degree was sup-

posed to cause the members of the Court anguish, modified according to the closeness of the relationship, which also decided the amount of black that was to be worn. Thus when in January of 1883 a brother of the Emperor William died, a gentleman whose mind was not very strong I believe, the Court mourning orders were: women to wear for one week black dresses, white gloves, black or white shoes, feathers and fans, pearls, diamonds or plain gold and silver ornaments. Men to wear black Court dress with black swords. For the second week the women were allowed coloured ribbons, flowers and ornaments; and then all were to go out of mourning.

Death was at this time horribly busy in the Queen's circle of friends. To her grief, Dean Stanley was one of those taken; as Lord Ronald Gower commented: "He is a greater loss to the Queen than to the Church"; Archbishop Tait, who by his good sense, solid qualities and intellectual simplicity had won her friendship; and Dr. Wellesley, the Dean of Windsor, also slipped out of life. In February 1881 Thomas Carlyle died, and Queen Victoria sent to inquire about him, not knowing that he had already passed away. "As we sat in the parlour the street-door bell rang, and 'a messenger from the Queen' was said to be in the passage; I went out at Mary's request, and found a Scotchman of middle age, who said he was 'sent by the Queen to inquire after Mr. Carlyle.' I told him of the death, asked him no questions. He may have been John Brown."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *William Allingham: a Diary.*

In February 1883 a sergeant, William Maye, of the 1st Battalion Coldstreams, went to relieve the guard at Windsor Castle, and died suddenly at his post. This tragic event made a deep impression on Victoria, who insisted on attending the funeral, a military one, and followed the cortège to the cemetery. She drove with Princess Beatrice in an open carriage, General Sir Henry Ponsonby and Colonel Byng being in attendance on horseback. Victoria did not alight, but watched the interment from her carriage, having sent a handsome wreath for the coffin, and returning to the castle after the firing of three volleys over the grave. She probably had a definite reason for this, in addition to the sympathy which she always felt over bereavement by death. In October 1875 the old farmer, John Brown, father of her servant, had died in his eighty-seventh year. He had been known to her, as had other tenants and cottagers on the Balmoral estate, probably for thirty years; but it was her affection for her servant which induced her to go to the funeral, and to command the greater part of her household to be present. Princess Beatrice, the Marchioness of Ely, the Hon. M. West, three doctors and others, the upper and outdoor servants, all went up to the home of the widow, a poor blind old woman sitting in her kitchen and mourning the loss of her lifelong companion. On the other side of the house door, in a tiny room, lay the coffin. As the road was impassable for the hearse the coffin had to be carried by the Brown brothers from the house to where the conveyance stood. Though it was raining hopelessly, the

Queen and Princess Beatrice followed to the hearse, and then, standing on a hillside, watched the procession and the crowd—which had come as much to see the Queen as to do respect to the dead man—wind along the road. “The sons were there, whom I distinguished easily from their being near good Brown, who wore his kilts, walking near the hearse. All walked except our gentlemen, who drove. It fortunately ceased raining just then. I went back to the house and tried to soothe dear old Mrs. Brown, and gave her a mourning brooch with a little bit of her husband’s hair which had been cut off yesterday. . . . We took some whisky-and-water and cheese, according to the universal Highland custom, and then left. . . . We drove quickly on, and I saw them go into the kirkyard, and through my glasses I could see them carry the coffin in. I was grieved I could not be in the kirkyard.”<sup>1</sup>

This incident, duly reported in the English newspapers, caused both comment and criticism. It was said that her Majesty could not do honour enough to her Highland servants and their relations, and that she had never been known to pay one tithe of such attention to any poor Windsor dependants. So when a soldier fell dead at her palace door she demonstrated her martial position, and showed her English subjects that it was possible for her to grieve even over a humble Englishman.

There is a curious little contrasting touch in the following, taken from Sir Algernon West’s *Reminiscences*:

<sup>1</sup> *More Leaves from the Journal.* By Queen Victoria.

cences. His friend Alfred Montgomery, who died in 1881, was one whose "sense of humour and wit lasted till the end; one day during his illness the Prince of Wales called on him, and shortly afterwards the Princess. On her departure, he said to the servant, 'Should the Queen call, say that I am too tired to see her Majesty.' Curiously enough, he once told me that though he had been in the Queen's household since her Majesty's accession, she had never once spoken to him."

Other honours had been done John Brown. Balnachoil, a fine house, popularly described as a mansion, had been built for his occupation at Balmoral, and given to him and his heirs for ever; some of the finest fishing and shooting on the Balmoral estate were strictly reserved for him; circumstances were made so easy for him that he was amassing a fortune, and it was rumoured that royal visitors to the castle were always enjoined—or did it of their own free wills—to leave a trifle for the favourite servant. The sum of £20,000 was named as his savings after his death, but that was perhaps an exaggeration. He had also been honoured, as a result of his mistress's praise of him to others, with a decoration from the King of Greece, while another distinguished person at Mentone had given him a gold medal.

On the few occasions on which the Queen appeared in public John Brown was even more eagerly looked for than her Majesty, and at the opening of the new Law Courts in December 1882 some one remarked, "Everything considered, he looks well. He shows no

sign as yet of suffering from his duty." We hear of him from Madame Waddington (*My First Years as a Frenchwoman*) in Paris with his mistress, and waiting at the door of the room in the British Embassy until the Queen came out that he might shake hands with Mr. Waddington and invite him to come to Scotland, "where he would receive a hearty welcome."

He had become more assertive, more lofty; there was no appeal against his word; and such a person has more enemies than friends. One man only he dared not interfere with, and that was Löhlein, the German valet who had come to England with Prince Albert. He did not hesitate to offer advice or comment to the sons and daughters of his mistress, and there are various allusions in the Queen's journals which show that Brown's opinion on everything was of import. Thus at the unveiling of the statue to Prince Albert at Edinburgh in 1876, at the end of the description we are told that Brown "was delighted with the reception." When the Duke of Connaught returned to Balmoral after the Egyptian war, and the Albaniys came home from their honeymoon, in face of royalties and aristocrats Brown stepped forward and asked them all to join in a Highland cheer for the bride and bridegroom. On the anniversary of the Prince Consort's birthday in 1876 the Queen notes: "I gave my faithful Brown an oxydized silver biscuit box and some onyx studs. He was greatly pleased with the former and the tears came into his eyes, and he said, 'It is too much.' . . . I gave my maids some

trifles from Dunbar; and to Janie Ely, the gentlemen and the servants a trifle each.”

When Brown died in 1883, at the age of fifty-seven, it must be realized that Victoria was already badly shaken by the many assassinations, her disappointments in foreign policy, her rooted distrust of a Liberal Government, and a succession of threatening letters sent to herself. It was probably in conjunction with these that Sir John Cowell, Master of the Household, issued some curious instructions to servants at Windsor in February 1883. Those who were on duty at the castle were forbidden to leave the palace, and those who went home to sleep were forbidden to visit music-halls, theatres or any place of public amusement; in addition, if any in their homes were suffering from illness, they were to report it and stay away from the castle altogether. This reminds one of the present Kaiser, who throughout his reign has occasionally issued such notices, and who, on hearing of any one suffering from a cold or sore throat even remotely connected with his household, would at once flee and seek shelter in another of his numerous castles or palaces.

On March 15, 1883, a Fenian attempt to blow up the Home Office failed; at Liverpool the police were busy with an organized band of dynamitards, and all public buildings were being watched by pickets and guards. When the Queen travelled at this time the whole length of the line was guarded by men stationed at distances which allowed of their being in sight of each other, and carrying flags and noisy fog-signals.

Two days after the attempt on the Home Office, Victoria, then at Windsor Castle, slipped on the stairs of the palace and caught her knee with such violence on the marble edge that it gave her much pain; and at this very moment happened the event which led to Brown's death. A certain young woman, Lady Florence Dixie, well known at the time in society—one who, like Dryden's Duke of Buckingham, had tried her hands at many things, and who lived at The Fisheries, a riverside house close to Windsor—had been writing letters to *The Times* about the Irish Land League. On Saturday the 17th, at about half-past four she walked near her house, and a little later returned to it in a state of agitation, disarray and mud, and with a cut hand. Her story was that two very tall women had attacked her, one throwing her down, the other stabbing at her with a knife, the blow being deflected by the whalebone of her stays. At the second stab Lady Florence seized the knife with both hands and shouted, upon which a handful of mud was pushed into her mouth, nearly choking her. The arrival of her St. Bernard dog coincided with her own loss of consciousness, and when she recovered the two people, whom she was convinced were men in disguise, had disappeared.

This event naturally caused a great sensation, and the Queen received the news as quickly as it could fly. The Prince of Wales and every one round sent condolences and inquiries to The Fisheries, but no one was so affected as Victoria, for here was another attempted assassination at her very gate and in broad

daylight. On the Sunday her Majesty refused to take her usual drive, and sent first the Marchioness of Ely, then Lord Methuen and Sir Henry Ponsonby, to The Fisheries. Not content with that, she asked Brown to examine the ground where the attack had been made. He drove there in an open cart, a present to him from the Queen, and closely examined everything, including the dog, feeling so puzzled with the whole case that he spent much time over it exposed to a bitter wind.

It may be mentioned that other people beside John Brown were very much puzzled, as the place at which the affair occurred was open to view from a well-frequented road, and the two women, or men, might have been wraiths from the way in which they entirely vanished. The only evidence of their presence was said to be the marks of hobnailed boots in the mud. Conviction generally spread, whether justly or unjustly, that love of notoriety was alone responsible for a theatrical episode.

The results were, however, serious for John Brown and the Queen. He took a bad cold, and for a week, while going about his duties, seemed unwell. On Monday the 26th he was too ill to get up, and erysipelas developed. Dr. Reid attended him, and Sir William Jenner was sent for on Tuesday morning. He died at 11.30 that night, killed, as some one said, by kindness, for a Highlander to die of a cold caught in a wind implied a too luxurious state of living.

The grief of the Queen was intense and noisy; her

exasperated nerves entirely gave way; she blamed Ireland, criminal Ireland, which had stolen from her her servant and friend; she blamed Gladstone, who had hoped by legislation alone to tame the wild land. Her mind became obsessed with Brown, and she drew up a notice to be inserted in the Court Circular of March 29, which ran to the length of twenty-five lines; an unprecedented feature in the whole history of that public record of trivialities—

“We have to record the death of Mr. John Brown, the Queen’s personal attendant. This melancholy event has caused the deepest regret to the Queen, the Royal Family and all the members of the Royal Household. To her Majesty the loss is irreparable, and the death of this truly faithful and devoted servant has been a grievous shock to the Queen. . . . During the last eighteen and a half years he served her Majesty constantly, and never once absented himself from his duty for a single day. He has accompanied the Queen in her daily walks and drives, and all her journeys and expeditions, as well as personally waiting on her at banquets, etc. An honest, faithful and devoted follower, a trustworthy, discreet and straightforward man, and possessed of strong sense, he filled a position of great and anxious responsibility, the duties of which he performed with such constant and unceasing care as to secure for himself the real friendship of the Queen.”

In this the Queen practically asked for her people’s sympathy, and they gave it warmly, recognizing the true facts of the case; but most Englishmen felt that

the death of this too prominent servant removed one who had long been damaging to royal prestige.

Brown’s body was sent to be buried at Craithie churchyard, near the river Dee, where, at Victoria’s order, a mausoleum of brick and encaustic tiles was built alongside the grave of his father; and the funeral was attended by all the servants at Balmoral. The Queen sent an extraordinary wreath for the coffin, one more suitable to a wedding, for it was composed of myrtle and white flowers. To it was attached the words : “A gracious expression of her Majesty’s personal sense of the loss she has sustained, and of her affection for her faithful servant.” (When will royalty allow a sense of humour to correct the bad taste of royal custom? When her Majesty graciously does something, the word is suitable from the pen of the reporter or the secretary, but there is a snobbish tinge about it when she deliberately uses it herself that makes it offensive.) At the hour at which John Brown was buried a service was held in his apartments at Windsor Castle, being attended by the Queen and Princess Beatrice.

After this the public announcements of the Queen’s ill-health were accompanied by vague and sinister rumours. Sir William Jenner was in constant attendance. It was stated that her fall and the shock of John Brown’s death had made her condition the cause of much solicitude; that rest, both mental and physical, was imperatively needed, for she could not stand long without anguish, and soon wearied of any intellectual effort; while the inflammation of the blood

was one of the worst signs. But the rumours went further, and there were whispers of some coming momentous change if the doctors could not overcome the weakness of the Queen: "We should be glad that there is no immediate prospect of a change on the throne." She had entirely given up driving, and never appeared outside the castle gates, and gossip had it that she feared assassination; the truth probably being that she was too ill to go out.

A curious order, made in the middle of April, that "in consequence of the mortality of sheep and lambs the Queen has commanded that no lamb shall be served in the Royal Household this season" raised something like consternation, showing as it did a lack of knowledge of the sheep-rearing industry. A fortnight later, upon the representations made to her, the Queen said, in effect, *revenons à nos moutons*—for the order was rescinded.

Victoria was to have gone on a visit to Sandringham, but it was put off, then arranged and again put off, and at last she went to Osborne on April 17. The journey was made in rigid privacy; from the castle she drove in a closed carriage, with equerries riding by the windows; the public and even the station officials were dispensed with at the stations, and all along the line no heads of railway departments were allowed to be on the platforms. In May the return was made in the same way, and on the 25th of that month she went to Balmoral under the same signs of secrecy, a great screen of evergreens being put up at Perth to hide her when passing to her breakfast-room.

There followed many strange stories as to her mental condition, especially as the doctors were reported to be very anxious about her; suggestions were made that the injured knee was but an innocent fiction intended to disguise the true state of affairs, and further whispers among those who were around her Majesty at the time were spread abroad to the effect that possibly a Regency would be arranged.

Later on the Queen indignantly protested that no woman who had to be lifted to and from her carriage in a chair would wish a crowd to stand watching the process, and that this was the cause of her journeys being so privately conducted.

It was hoped that the change of air and scene at Balmoral would have a good effect upon the Queen’s health, but, to the disappointment of every one, it but deepened the depression. This was somewhat natural, as the whole place was reminiscent of John Brown, and all her thought was for his memory. Arriving at Balmoral in the morning, she ordered everything to be in readiness to take her to Craithie churchyard, and after a short luncheon drove with Princess Beatrice and Dr. Profeit to the spot. A few days later she was there again, carrying with her a wreath to lay upon the grave. The servants at Balmoral were ordered to wear mourning bands round their arms for him, and the royal servants contributed unquestioningly to a memorial subscription fund. The royal birthday passed without rejoicings, and there were no servants’ or tenants’ parties.

The memoirs which John Brown left were never

published, all his papers being, by the Queen's command, taken possession of by Sir Henry Ponsonby. Boehm, the sculptor, was ordered to make a life-sized statue of the dead man, which in the following year was mounted on a pedestal and placed close to the castle at Balmoral; and at Osborne was placed another monument to his memory in the shape of a granite seat, upon which the Queen had some pathetic lines engraved.

When at Osborne in August Victoria summoned Tennyson for one of those interviews which gave so much pleasure to both, and asked him to write an epitaph to put on the tomb at Craithie. The poet, however, sent her a quotation, and Victoria had a stone put over John Brown's grave which rivalled that to Beaconsfield, the inscription running—

THIS STONE  
IS ERECTED IN AFFECTIONATE REMEMBRANCE OF  
JOHN BROWN  
THE DEVOTED AND FAITHFUL PERSONAL ATTENDANT AND BELOVED  
FRIEND OF QUEEN VICTORIA. 'THAT FRIEND ON WHOSE  
FIDELITY YOU COUNT, THAT FRIEND GIVEN YOU BY  
CIRCUMSTANCES OVER WHICH YOU HAVE NO  
CONTROL, WAS GOD'S OWN GIFT.'

Of her last interview with the Laureate, which took place a little later in the year, the Queen wrote: "When I took leave of him, I thanked him for his kindness and said I needed it, for I had gone through much; and he said, 'You're so alone on that terrible height; it is terrible. I've only a year or two to live,

but I shall be happy to do anything for you I can—send for me whenever you like.’ I thanked him warmly.”

Victoria had intended to go to the Continent in June, and her yacht, the *Osborne*, was docked at Portsmouth, thirty workmen busy at getting it ready; but at the last the journey was postponed, the royal party only returning from Balmoral on the 23rd of the month, when the Queen had to be carried to the train in an invalid chair, and for almost the first time in her life being half an hour late in starting. In July she went to Osborne, and in August returned to Balmoral; and now we get one of the first indications that she was beginning to feel that her presence was to some extent necessary to her ministers, for that journey was postponed some days, as Parliament had not been prorogued. However, once in Scotland she remained there three months, coming back at the end of November through heavy snow, and under threats that explosives would be placed on the lines. An extra pilot-engine preceded the train, and extra guards were stationed, one in sight of the other, for the whole six hundred miles; and nothing happened.

This autumn the Queen amused herself by preparing her second series of journals, *More Leaves from the Journal of a Life in the Highlands*; and when it was issued, in 1884, it bore the dedication—

“To my loyal Highlanders and especially to the memory of my devoted personal attendant and faithful friend, John Brown, these records of my widowed life in Scotland are gratefully dedicated.

“Victoria, R. I.”

The volume concluded with a short appreciation of John Brown, one paragraph in which ran : "His loss to me (ill and helpless as I was at the time from an accident) is irreparable, for he deservedly possessed my entire confidence; and to say that he is daily, nay hourly, missed by me, whose lifelong gratitude he won by his constant care, attention and devotion, is but a feeble expression of the truth."

This whole John Brown incident is typical of Victoria's character. From the very first she had been unable to stand alone; she needed a stronger personality to support her. Melbourne, Prince Albert, John Brown, these had, each in his turn, afforded that support: Melbourne entirely during her youthful exercise of power; her husband had wielded the power for her and left her happy with the appearance of it; John Brown slid insensibly into the position of confidential helper and stay, and she discussed everything with him, being delighted with his shrewd answers. At a time when she was lonely, overworked by her own indiscriminating will, the subject of her people's bitter disappointment and discontent, bearing many sorrows caused by death, this man, strong, devoted and capable, stood always by her side. The mere personal proximity during so many years, combined with some natural sympathy between their natures, drew him slowly into his position of close friend as well as of attentive servant. Her simplicity and frankness, as well as her invincible faith in her high position, blinded her to the impropriety of her constant public recognition of him, to the possibility

that vulgar gossip—born of anger—could arise; to the natural contrast which the public must draw between her attitude to a simple Scotch peasant and her own eldest son, heir to her throne.

Every one knew that the Prince of Wales was never consulted on matters of State policy, that his ambitions were forcibly bounded by the laying of foundation-stones and the opening of charitable institutions. It was also known, as time went on, that when he saw younger men than himself holding positions of great power and influence he openly regretted that he had been delegated at the beginning of his career to the duties of a social figurehead, and it was said that he aspired to higher things. His many journeys abroad, laughed at by some, were regarded by others as a deliberate self-training in the knowledge of people, statesmen and feeling in different countries, and as providing the means of studying the effects of our foreign policy both at home and abroad. Quite unconsciously to himself the exaltation of John Brown turned the people’s attention to the Prince, and they centred their hopes in him.

However, the Queen, engrossed in her feelings, knew nothing of this, and to the day of her death shut out of her counsels the man who should have been her chief support. She continued to hold herself aloof from great and small, while the Prince and Princess of Wales broke through the cold and rigid German Court etiquette by mingling with those who were virtually their subjects, and accepting invitations in London and the country. It had never been done

before with anything like the same freedom, and foreign Court pedants as well as her Majesty looked on aghast. But it brought them close to the nation, and though Albert Edward spoke English with a strong German accent, he was regarded as more English than his mother.

The long series of deaths which had so distressed the Queen came temporarily to an end in 1884 when Prince Leopold died suddenly at Cannes. He had married in 1882, and was given as a wedding present Claremont and all it contained by her Majesty, who bought it outright from the State. He inherited his father's tastes, and on the rare occasions on which he chaired a meeting his speeches much resembled those of Prince Albert. In the general irritation against royalty, it was said that it was impossible that one of the Queen's sons could make a decent speech, and that they were written for him; but there was no reason to believe that this was anything more than idle spite. He alone of the four brothers spoke English with a pure accent. His little daughter was born in 1883; his son's birth did not take place until after his death.

Leopold craved for some active position, but his health and his mother's solicitude enforced great restrictions upon him. He particularly hoped to be made Governor-General of Canada, and Gladstone would have been quite willing to give him the post, but the Queen forbade, and the Prince felt much hurt at the Prime Minister's refusal. Early in March 1884 he went to Cannes to avoid the bitter east winds, and there, at the Cercle Nautique, he, too, slipped on the

stairs and again hurt his knee. He was taken to the Villa Nevada, where he was residing, and seemed little the worse, but in the night he died in an epileptic fit. He was buried at Windsor, and, having been totally unable to lead a physically active life, the Queen ordered a full military funeral, his body being borne by the Seaforth Highlanders, for in this regiment she had given him one of those much-discussed honorary colonelcies.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE GERMAN INVASION

"He is a dear, good, amiable, high-principled young man, who, I am sure, will make our dearest — *very* happy, and she will, I am sure, be a most devoted, loving wife to him. She is *very, very* happy, and it is a pleasure to see their young, happy faces beaming with love for one another."—*Letters of Queen Victoria.*

"I am far more proud of my Stuart than of my Hanoverian ancestors."—*Queen Victoria.*

IF Queen Victoria never neglected her duty at a funeral, and pleased her sentiment by remembering all death anniversaries, she extended that thought and sentiment to more cheerful things, and gave her protection to constant lovers. It is impossible for the ordinary commoner to believe that royal marriages are not solely the result of interested considerations, and however much it may be protested that a young princess or prince has made a love match, there are few to give the statement credence. However, the Queen helped forward some marriages which seem to have had their origin in sheer romance.

One of these took place in 1880 when Frederica, "the lily of Hanover," the daughter of Victoria's blind cousin George, whom Bismarck had deposed in 1866, owned herself in love with one of her father's late equerries, Baron Pawell von Rammingen. This was

certainly not a marriage of high degree for a princess, a great-granddaughter of George III of England and daughter of an ancient line of German kings.

George of Hanover, Frederica's brother, was then living in Vienna, and there seemed little prospect before Frederica other than that of a lone lady of somewhat restricted means, when love pointed out the way. Finding herself hopeless against the world at the moment of her grand passion, she appealed to her earlier protectress, the Queen of England. The adventure pleased the Queen, who did not go all the way with German punctiliousness where true love was concerned. She arranged that the wedding should take place in her private chapel at Windsor. Remonstrance reached her from the Court of the German Emperor, and the whole of the etiquette-ruled nations looked askance upon the marriage, affecting to disbelieve that the Queen could have promised her support. Victoria was, however, determined that they should make no mistake about her sanction, and ordered that a list of the presents should appear in the Court Circular, and two days later had the dress and veil fully described and acknowledged as her gifts.

Thus she made two people happy, but one would imagine that the Baron was even happier out of Germany than in it; Lord Carlingford, writing to Edward Lear from Balmoral in 1884, said, "I found the Queen remarkably well, better in body and mind than I have seen her for a long time, though anxious about public affairs. The lady-in-waiting is the widowed Duchess

of Roxburghe, whom I like. Princess Frederica of Hanover, and her husband Baron Pawell von Rammingen are here. He is a pleasing sort of man in an awkward position—one of the servants informed a maid-of-honour that ‘Mrs. Rummagen was come.’ She is very tall, distinguished and charming.”

If Victoria shocked Prussia by mothering this romance, a little later she found opportunity to flout all the German ideals of caste which have ever existed, and she carried out her rôle of fairy godmother with the same determined and complacent autocracy which she showed in neglecting some of her most important duties at home. Three more marriages she tried to arrange with morganatic bridegrooms on the one hand and one ducal and two royal princesses on the other. The bridegrooms were the Battenbergs.

If English people think of the Battenbergs at all they still either wonder who on earth they were, or content themselves with saying wearily, “Germans, of course.” They were Germans on their father’s side, that father being Alexander of Hesse, uncle to the Grand Duke Louis. But their mother was a Pole, whose father, said to have been of humble origin, rose to be War Minister at Hesse-Darmstadt. Alexander was brother to the Empress of Alexander II, Czar of Russia, and he took service in the Russian army in 1851. Before this he had met at the Court there Mademoiselle Haucke, a Polish maid-of-honour, and when he married her in 1851 the title of Princess Battenberg was given her by the Czar. Of this morganatic marriage at least five children were born,

four boys and a girl, the three eldest boys being Louis, Alexander and Henry, two of them becoming German officers. Being first cousins of the husband of Princess Alice, the Queen naturally knew them well, and as they were handsome young men without a penny piece among them, they appealed strongly to her sense of protectiveness. The eldest boy she invited to England, where at the age of fourteen he arrived, and being naturalized entered the British Navy. This is he who, wisely yielding to natural British distrust, in the autumn of 1914 gave up his position as First Sea Lord of the Admiralty.

The second brother, Alexander, was made by the Tsar, in agreement with the other Powers, Prince of Bulgaria, but not being sufficiently subservient to his patron he fell into disgrace and had to give up his dignity, after which he wandered back to more western lands, his one ambition being to reoccupy his old position as a Prussian soldier.

The third boy, Henry, educated in Thuringia, became a lieutenant in the Saxon Hussars, and in 1882 a member of the Berlin "Garde du Corps."

When her Majesty went abroad, which by this time was almost every year, she would generally see one or more of the Battenbergs. In 1871, when she was staying at the Villa Hohenlohe at Baden-Baden, among the guests was the mother, Princess Battenberg. This villa belonged to Victoria's half-sister, Feodore; and the Queen went there once again—the following year—as a guest, for Feodore died in the autumn of 1872, after which her Majesty became owner of the

property. Her continental holidays were spent in various places, Coburg occasionally attracting her. Baveno, on Lake Maggiore, was the chosen spot in 1879, and there, though it rained nearly all the time, she passed her days in the beautiful garden; from there she went to Les Rosieres at Mentone, where, from her window, she could look down on a forest of orange and citron trees.

In 1880 she went again to the Villa Hohenlohe, and thence to the castle at Darmstadt, where again she lived, her mind filled with memories and regrets, in her dead daughter's rooms.

While she was there two things happened. One was the engagement, made by Bismarck, between Prince William of Prussia and Augusta Victoria, daughter of Frederick of Schleswig-Holstein-Sondenburg-Augustenburg, and granddaughter of Feodore. Bismarck's choice was governed by his hatred of the Crown Princess, her sharp intellect and her English leanings, which made him look around for the most German of German princesses, one who would never think of opposing his rule. Augusta Victoria was the embodiment of his ideal; domestic and economical by necessity, the child of a mother whose intelligence was far from strong, all her qualities were simply housewifely. The engagement being an accomplished fact, Bismarck caused articles and paragraphs to appear in all the papers praising the Princess for her German manners, her German appearance, her German ways, until the gilded youth of Berlin jokingly declared that her only use was to make sweets and

jam; to which Prince William replied, with pointed irony against his mother, that a wife who could make sweets was preferable to one who could discuss the Constitution. The second event was the birth of a romance between Princess Beatrice, the "permanent Princess," as some one called her, and Prince Henry of Battenberg.

Princess Beatrice had for years been her mother's shadow; flower shows, bazaars, Highland servants' balls, secluded visits abroad, quiet existence at Osborne, Balmoral or Windsor, had made up the sum of her days; all punctuated by dreary drives to tombs and mausoleums and accompanied by all the varying moods of her royal mother, who could be very cross at times; she could, "for no reason, be arbitrary, contest a point and close the argument without further discussion" (*Quarterly Review*).

It is said that Princess Beatrice and Prince Henry became engaged secretly in 1881, but the secret was well kept, even from the Queen.

In 1882 Victoria stayed at Mentone for a month; in 1883 she had intended visiting Darmstadt again, for she had arranged a marriage between her then favourite Battenberg, Louis, and her granddaughter, Victoria of Hesse, they being first cousins once removed. However, her health was in far too precarious a state, and her sprained knee made it impossible for her to move about, for it was nearly a year from her fall on the stairs before the Queen could walk, even with the aid of sticks.

This Battenberg marriage caused more consterna-

tion in Germany than did that of Frederica. The Emperor William actually forbade it; the Princess had her grandmother at her back, however, and a grandmother who was not likely to defer to the scruples of another monarch in such a matter. So keenly necessary did the Queen consider her presence to make the affair go off smoothly, that a few days after the funeral of Prince Leopold she went to Hesse-Darmstadt, where the wedding was held on April 26, 1884, the two brothers, Alexander and Henry, being there. Three things happened at this visit: the first being the marked attentions shown by Alexander Battenberg to Princess Victoria of Prussia, daughter of the Crown Prince, which raised very ruffled feelings on the part of the Prussian royalties.

Another event was the confession of the secret between Henry and Princess Beatrice to Queen Victoria, which caused a great upheaval. It was one matter to allow one out of a multitude of granddaughters to marry a handsome young man without prospects, but quite another thing to approve of the same fate for the daughter of the most important royalty in the world. So the Princess went through a strenuous interval before her royal mother calmed down and considered the net advantages to herself of such a match. The more she considered the more solid she saw these advantages to be, and soon became as keen on it as was Princess Beatrice.

The third event—for a little time kept secret—on being revealed produced a more terrible explosion than anything that had gone before. It was the

private marriage, on the very night of his daughter's wedding, of the Grand Duke Louis with Countess Kalomine, another nobody from the royal point of view.

The old William of Prussia and Victoria joined hands over this: the one from Imperial pride and the other from pride and sentiment, for the Queen regarded a second marriage as something irreligious, if not actually blasphemous. The two monarchs worked so hard over the affair that in a few months the Supreme Court of Leipzig decided that Countess Kalomine was not legally the wife of Duke Louis, though it was said that justice and common sense were on the lady's side. It is curious to see that in all these cases the man who was a nobody from the royal point of view was eligible, but the woman who was not royal was a person to be scorned. It was Victoria's way.

The engagement of Princess Beatrice was not publicly announced until the end of November, when it created a stir in England, public opinion being intensely against it. People reasoned that here was another German, a lieutenant in the Prussian army with pay of about £70 a year, who would have to be supported by them—and there were already too many such.

Henry's elder brother Louis had become a commander in the navy, raised over the heads of English officers; Prince Christian, comfortably settled with a good income in a comfortable house in Windsor Park, had no need to seek for a sinecure, or a position

with emolument; Count Gleichen was Constable of Windsor Castle and an admiral of the British Fleet; Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar was moved from the Government House at Portsmouth and given the command of the Forces in Ireland early in 1885, a post which should have been bestowed upon an English soldier; Prince Leiningen, commander of the Queen's yacht, was made vice-admiral; Princess Frederica and her husband were always with us; Prince Teck was raising comment at the time through alleged extravagance, a sale of "surplus" furniture having been effected at Kensington Palace.

Really the most loyal had some cause for complaint at this German invasion; but Victoria did not mind, and calmly went on dealing out posts and honours in the face of all grumblers. She could not understand that her people were a power with which the sovereign should deal, but went straight over all their susceptibilities and prejudices, never failing to make a demand when she needed their money. What is the use of being a queen if you cannot do as you like? The Prince of Wales had a far finer sense of delicacy; that is to say, the somewhat brutal Georgian characteristics were in him modified by generosity and perception. His eldest boy came of age in January 1885, but though he himself was deeply in debt, and had an income which, large as it was, did not do all that was required of it, he asked no settlement for his son. His horror at the inevitable Radical comments made him decide to leave the field open to his sister Beatrice. On her account the Queen made the

usual demands—a dowry of £30,000 and £6000 a year—and the weary Commons, seeing at last a temporary end of royal marriages in sight, gave, after the usual strong protests, and with thirty-eight dissentients, their assent.

If Germany was astonished at the Frederica marriage and affronted at that of the Louis Battenberg's, it was in a state of stupefaction over the Henry Battenberg alliance. Even the Princess Royal could not be reconciled to it, and as usual said what she thought. The Prince of Wales also did his utmost to oppose it, and altogether discord was rampant in the royal family. This was shown in the first week of January 1885, when the Queen and the permanent Princess absented themselves from the great coming-of-age celebrations at Sandringham. Prince Henry, who was in England in December, left our shores without receiving the congratulations either of the Prince of Wales or the Duke of Edinburgh. It is easy to imagine the disgust of the Duchess of Edinburgh, Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, over so unpretending a bridegroom.

Even Ernst of Saxe-Coburg ranged himself against the Queen and refused to be present at the wedding, which wedding, however, was really of supreme importance only to the chief persons concerned. Prince Henry was constantly coming over to England, and the lovers had opportunities of meeting when in April Victoria went first to Aix-les-Bains and then to Darmstadt, where a great-grandchild, daughter of the Louis Battenbergs, was christened.

The Queen was at this time, 1885, not quite sixty-eight years of age, but she dressed like a very old woman, and it was quite common for people to think of her as aged. The following paragraph from an unidentifiable newspaper cutting gives an interesting picture of her as she appeared just before going abroad—

“Here comes the Queen! The cry is raised far off, and at a rapid rate on comes the imposing cavalcade, through loud buzzing of the multitude of lips, ‘The Queen! The Queen!’ As usual there is a small military escort, cavalry with drawn swords and others. Then come the outriders, jockeys on horseback, riding rapidly and clad in the deepest mourning livery. The Queen’s carriage is drawn by four splendid horses conducted by a postilion mounted on one of them. Two Highlanders now occupy the seat once so proudly held by John Brown, one of them being his brother George, who is now with the Queen. At sight of the aged sovereign every hat is raised. The great lady shows the years of sorrow. Her hair is white and her face careworn. She is dressed in the very deepest mourning, with heavy *crêpe* veil and the widow’s cap. Beside her sits Princess Beatrice, clad in what is called half-mourning, with a purple velvet bonnet, and a mantle embroidered with the same colour. On the front seat of the carriage is Prince Henry of Battenberg, the Princess’s affianced husband. He is a fine-looking man, with what I should call features rather square cut. One can well understand the rumour that on both sides this may be a love match.”

During that short stay in London the little party went to the Botanical Gardens, and coming away the off-leader took fright, plunged and kicked, and only with great difficulty was got under control. The leading pair had to be detached, and the Queen drove away with only two horses.

By July, when the wedding took place at Osborne, most of the quarrels had at least been smoothed over; the Prince of Wales gave away the bride, the Princess of Wales supported the Queen at the ceremony in Whippingham Church. Prince Louis of Hesse, whitewashed by this time, was of necessity present, but there was no representative at all from Prussia, and the daughters of the Crown Princess did not join the bridesmaids as did the young Princesses of Wales. Gladstone was carefully omitted from the invitation list.

Directly after the marriage Henry of Battenberg was created a royal prince by the Queen, which completed the consternation among her Prussian cousins, who decided that her Majesty was insulting them, and all foreign Courts refused to recognize the title, which, however, gave him in England precedence over the husband of Princess Louise, the Marquis of Lorne, never too well treated by the family into which he had married.

Victoria further bestowed upon her new son-in-law the Order of the Garter, a bestowal which entailed an outlay of about £500, which she intended to defray, but when it came to the point she thought it better to let the privilege devolve upon her faithful subjects.

The German comments upon this new Royal Highness aroused her defiance, and she looked round to see how she could further prove her power in the making of princes. Count Gleichen, another son of her sister Feodore, had in 1861 married a daughter of Sir George Seymour, and this being a morganatic marriage he had renounced his rank as Prince Victor Hohenlohe, taking instead a minor title of his father's. The Queen commanded him to resume his original title, but of course the German relatives refused to recognize this, though Prince Victor's children are cousins to the present German Empress.

Early in August Prince Henry's parents, Alexander of Hesse and Princess Battenberg, were guests at Windsor, and then the royal party went northwards, as the bridal pair were to live with the Queen. Prince Henry was very obedient in those days, for he, and with him Louis of Hesse, wore kilts and sporrans on the journey, and he had to wear these breezy garments for three months, until chill November nearing its end he was permitted to return to town with his wife and mamma-in-law.

The Queen did not often let things be done in Scotland in a half-hearted way. All the male servants and relatives had to don the kilt, the change of costume having to be made *en route* in the train. Her love for the Stuarts made her choose the Royal Stuart tartan plaid as the dominant adornment of Balmoral. Thus all the carpets were made of it, and much of the furniture covered with it, while the thistle was

embroidered on her chairs, and her favourite dinner service was bordered with tartan. It must have been hideously depressing, but she loved it. One of her most cherished possessions was a little pin-cushion on tartan wooden mounts with a portrait of the Prince on one side, and this was said to be always on her dressing-table. This reminds me of an assertion I have seen somewhere that on her breakfast-table every Sunday, and only on Sunday, two little silver salt-cellars were always laid, which had been given her by John Brown. When in the north she chose Scottish doctors, and it is on record that one newly appointed medical professor announced the honour to his class by writing on the blackboard that he had been made physician to the Queen. When later in the day he looked at the board again some wag had added "God save the Queen."

Once Victoria asked a crowd to Balmoral. It was in 1885, when the British Association met at Aberdeen under the presidency of Lyon Playfair, and she first invited him and Lord Rayleigh, the Montreal president, to dine and sleep, the chief point of conversation mentioned being her description of the Prince Consort's interest in science. This meeting probably suggested an invitation to all the members, and the newspapers supplied details not mentioned in the *Memoirs of Sir Lyon Playfair*, by Wemyss Reid. The British Association arrived there, but found that both the Queen and Princess Beatrice had arranged a day's excursion for themselves which would keep them away as long as the visitors were near the castle; and prob-

ably the former never knew that it was said that the accommodation was defective and the luncheon-table somewhat meagre. A very different reception from that accorded to the British Association by the Queen and Prince Albert in 1859.

## CHAPTER XIX

### “SHE OUGHT TO BE WHIPPED”

“Here are women—doting wives and loving mothers—quitting the serene and holy circle of their own hearths, relinquishing for an appointed term the happiness and tenderness of home, to endure a glorifying servitude beneath the golden yoke of ceremony.”—*Douglas Jerrold on Court Ladies.*

“Then comes the list of the General Committee (of the London National Society for Woman’s Suffrage). We see the names of Mrs. Somerville, Miss Nightingale, Miss Frances Cobb, Miss Martineau, Mrs. Grote, Miss Hosmer, Madame Bodichon, and we greet the owners with a loving smile, and congratulate them on fellowship with Charles Kingsley, Edwin Arnold, Grote, Masson, F. Palgrave, Lyon Playfair, Huxley, Lord Romilly, F. W. Newman and Mill.”—‘*Punch*,’ June 1868.

THOUGH Victoria was especially keen upon bestowing honours on her connections—when Prince George of Wales received the Garter in 1885 he made the twenty-eighth royal knight of the Order, as against six in 1837—she sometimes thought of humbler folk. Under Disraeli’s advice she had offered Tennyson a Baronetcy and Carlyle the Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, but both were refused. In 1883 Tennyson was offered a Barony and Gladstone urged him to accept it, telling a friend that the only thing he felt dubious about was whether Tennyson would insist upon wearing his extraordinary hat, his unfailing companion, in the House of Lords. Tennyson was

not eager to take the new rank, but eventually accepted it.

Arthur Helps and Theodore Martin, two of Victoria's most faithful friends, had been knighted and invested with the Order of the Bath; and for her magnificent charity Miss Burdett Coutts was made a peeress in 1871, upon which *Punch* declared that her old title of Lady Bountiful could never be forgotten. Ten years later the Baroness married William Ashmead-Bartlett, she being then sixty-seven and he a young man. It was a remarkable marriage, an accentuation of that of Disraeli and contracted for the same motive, that an ambitious young man might be helped to his desires; but it might have passed without great comment had not her Majesty made so strong a protest against it and, when the Baroness persisted in her plans, virtually intimated that she must consider herself in permanent disgrace.

The Queen's ideal of womanhood was entirely Germanic; that is to say, it was something less than reality and very much less than ideal. She was fond of talking of her "poor, feeble sex" and of "female brains being overtaxed," repeating and thoroughly believing all the nonsense inculcated by Stockmar and Prince Albert; and this explains the constant pity she expressed for herself, "a poor, weak woman" who had to overtax her brains doing man's work.

A clever woman she always avoided; it is doubtful whether she thought such a one quite proper, her conviction being that a woman's interests should be limited to births, marriages and deaths, or, to put the

sentiment in other words, to children, cooking and church. Other subjects should be left to the stronger intellect of men, to whom women should defer even in the veriest trifle. Through her widowhood more than in her married life Queen Victoria lived up to this idea. Her politics—“I hate politics,” she once said to Tennyson—were based upon those of the Prince Consort; her foreign policy was, as nearly as she could make it so, an expression of the views he had held a quarter of a century before; her habits were still those once encouraged by him. She never bought new clothes without consulting her memory of his tastes, and there were many around her who wished that she could be induced to wear something less dowdy and commonplace than the garments so inspired. She once told Theodore Martin that—

“*He* would not have allowed me or any of our daughters to appear in any dress or coiffure or bonnet not becoming or proper, and he would have made us take it off. I never bought a dress or bonnet without consulting him, and his taste was always good. I remember so well when my French coiffeur came from Paris every year and brought over things which were tried on, the Prince has come in and said, ‘That you shall not wear.’”

It all went back to the same thing, this struggle—against her principles—to do intellectual work, this plain dressing, this subservience to a man’s will: all meant that to her the man should command the woman’s obedience. That being so, it is not to be wondered at that such an idea as Woman’s Franchise

upset her. The following is from a letter of hers on the subject, again to Theodore Martin—

“The Queen is most anxious to enlist every one who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of ‘Woman’s Rights,’ with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor, feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety. Lady [Harberton?] ought to get a *good whipping*. It is a subject which makes the Queen so furious that she cannot contain herself. God created man and woman different—then let them remain each in their own position. Tennyson has some beautiful lines on the difference of men and women in *The Princess*. Woman would become the most hateful, heartless and disgusting of human beings were she allowed to unsex herself, and where would be the protection which man was intended to give the weaker sex?”

I have always enjoyed this letter. It is practically the basis upon which the “antis” have founded their arguments or want of arguments: “God created man and woman different.” That suggests so many questions to the inquiring mind. Is God really interested in the merits of skirts over bloomers, in twaddle about dress, over squabbles about politics, in the brainless woman over the thoughtful one, in the idle over the self-supporting woman? But across the lighter feeling that this letter raises comes one of disgust that the Queen’s respect for her own sex was so small as to allow her to suggest indignity for one with whom she disagreed.

This belittling of women was not confined to Queen Victoria. For many years the *Annual Register* was edited by two ladies, the sisters of Herman Merivale, whose ill-health devolved the work upon them. Their account of the Franco-Prussian war was so admirable that another publisher wished to issue it as a separate volume. However, on finding that the authors were women he decided that republication was out of the question, as it was not considered proper that women should be entrusted with such high work.

On this subject Victoria should have liked Gladstone, for he agreed with her on the Suffrage; but Disraeli, when appealed to before his last Government, gave Miss Frances Power Cobb authority to announce that he should vote for the measure. "Mr. Gladstone, however, has declared that he will oppose it; and the Government opposition will be fatal to us. Let him be known as William the Woman-hater." So said Miss Cobb to the meeting she had called; and Gladstone had the intellectual women against him everywhere.

But, as has been said, the Queen did not like Gladstone, and more, she did not like Mrs. Gladstone, who was far too able a woman to please her taste. The Gladstones on rare occasions went to dine and sleep at Windsor, and one reads of Mrs. Gladstone invited to lunch there and taking it with those whom W. H. Brookfield facetiously called the servants, the ladies-in-waiting and the grooms of the chamber, etc., and then having five minutes' conversation with her Majesty, probably both being very glad when the

restrained and chilly meeting was over. On one occasion the Prime Minister had some adventure in a fog, in which a horse tried to go upstairs, which was too good a story not to be repeated everywhere. Being commanded to dine and sleep at Windsor, a lady in the train discussed with him the fog, the horse and the staircase at length; others did the same on the way. At the castle Sir Henry Ponsonby was the first to allude to it, then came Sir John Cowell, Master of the Household. To all Gladstone gave the same reply: "I assure you it was much exaggerated." After dinner, in the corridor, her Majesty came to speak to him, saying, "We have had dreadful weather lately, and you must have had a bad experience the other night." "Oh, ma'am, I assure you too much has been made of it," was his answer. And some one remarked what a solecism it was that a man of Gladstone's age and eminence should go to Windsor—dress-coat and pantaloons—stay the night, and all the talk he had with his sovereign was a word or two about the fog.

The Queen's feelings on femininity were not confined to the question of the vote; she further expressed it to Lord Herschell after Tennyson's death, when he was commanded to a dine-and-sleep visit. Miss Jean Ingelow, a pleasant but mediocre poet, was spoken of at the royal table, the Queen turning to Herschell and saying—

"I have had Miss Ingelow's claim to the Laureateship put before me, and I admire her poetry extremely, but I do not consider that a woman can properly fill the post of Poet Laureate."

Herschell bowed acquiescence and did not utter his thoughts, which were that "if one woman can fill the post of Queen of England and Empress of India, another might be trusted to write a royal ode now and then."<sup>1</sup>

But though Victoria could not stand a clever woman, she also did not like a socially stupid one, being very impatient of dulness. If some one praised a lady as good and kind, the answer might be—

"Yes, but I've no patience with her; she is so stupid."

This did not mean that she was drawing comparisons between her own powers and those of the other, but that there must be no stupidity in relation to herself and her affairs; it might clog the wheels upon which the State ran.

Even for intellectual men she had no affinity. That authors were doing a good work she realized, but it did not touch her life or interests, and so she left all such out in the cold. She made a friend of Tennyson because some sentiments in his incomparable *In Memoriam* seemed to fit her case, and she once arranged a meeting with Carlyle, Browning, Grote, Dickens and Lyell at the house of Lady Augusta Stanley. This was the exception which proved the rule very sharply, though her flatterers have used it as a proof that she was deeply interested in literature.

To Browning, who had just published *The Book and the Ring*, she said, "Have you been writing anything lately?" As she continued to stand all the

<sup>1</sup> *Some Memories of Victorian London.* By L. B. Walford.

visitors stood also, and Carlyle was both old and frail. He was talking with her Majesty, "launching forth his great, rolling periods as only he can," until the pain in his back was almost unendurable. "We who knew the Queen so well were delighted to see the pleasure that her Majesty was receiving from the conversation, but I must own both the dean and I were apprehensive for her aged subject," said Lady Augusta in telling the story. At last the Sage of Chelsea took the matter into his own hands. Seizing a chair, he said—

"If your Majesty would please to be seated we could carry on the subject with greater ease."

Her Majesty took a chair, still talking, and Carlyle was happy for the rest of the meeting, but Victoria was not quite so pleased. The old man declared afterwards that it was "impossible to imagine a politer little woman; nothing the least imperious; all gentle, all sincere . . . makes you feel, too, if you have any sense in you, that she is a queen."

Victoria said of him that he was gruff-tempered, if not unmannerly. She could not quite forgive the liberty he had taken.

This importance of being allowed to sit in the Queen's presence reminds me of another story given in a magazine article, and somewhat resembling the Carlyle episode. The Queen, the Empress Frederick and fifteen other royalties when at Sandringham determined to pay what was somewhat loosely regarded as a surprise visit to a neighbouring vicar. Two menservants were thoughtfully sent in advance with cakes

and delicacies to lay the tables for tea. The hostess, as was the custom a few years ago, poured out tea for this regal crowd, and, as may be imagined, was kept hard at work. That task over, she was *not* asked to sit down in her own drawing-room, and so stood for a long period, until a princess implored her mother to ask their hostess to take a seat, when the permission was *most graciously given*. Let us hope that this example of courtesy is not true, for if it were what a condemnation it offers of the ways of the Court then. How could any writer use such a word as *graciously* over such a rudely delayed invitation?

But to return to the Queen's views upon her sex. They were perfectly sincere, for she had been inoculated with such ideas by one whom she thought infallible, but they had their inevitable consequence. A man might sin, yet kiss her Majesty's hand, but should the merest suspicion fall upon a woman she at once became ostracized. Never until Victoria's time was this distinction so bitterly marked, and it was the result, not of a high ideal of morals, but of a low ideal of womanhood. And this gives the strongest reason for the unpopularity of the late Queen among intellectual women. No woman likes or trusts that woman who regards her own sex meanly. It seems to me, however, that Victoria's attitude in making this great difference between men and women has had one good result, in that it has so shocked and incensed women that they in their turn tend to demand from men the cleanliness that has been demanded from them. For, whatever we may say or think of the Court, no

one can doubt that it does influence what may be termed the fashion in morals of the nation. Albert and Victoria set themselves to impress on the people a new ideal of domestic life, and they succeeded to a great extent, at least they went half-way to success. Our present royalties do not talk about such aims, for the habit is made, but their influence is quite as strong.

Nothing could have persuaded Victoria that God had given women brains to use just as He had given them to men. She would have answered as before, "God made man and woman different," and have felt that there was no appeal against the way in which she translated the words; and she would have also felt in this as in other things that the fact that she was queen rendered it even more impossible that she could be mistaken, her reverence for the royal position being as deep as her belief in her own rightness.

This was shown on the publication of the first part of Charles Greville's diaries in 1874, which caused her much annoyance. Greville had been Clerk to the Privy Council, and his journals dealt, not with the Council, but with the public events and politics of his period, including much criticism of royalties and well-known people. He died in 1864, leaving these diaries to his friend Henry Reeve to edit and publish. Reeve allowed ten years to elapse and then issued the first three volumes, which ended with the death of William IV. Eleven days after the publication of the work the Queen sent Reeve, who believed that she had not really read the book, but only newspaper

extracts, a message by Sir Arthur Helps expressing her disapproval. She found three causes for complaint: that the book was disparaging to her family; that it tended to weaken the Monarchy; that it proceeded from official persons. Reeve begged Helps to reply, with his humble duty, that the book showed that if Monarchy had really been endangered it was by the depravity of George IV and the absurdities of William IV, but that under her Majesty's reign it had been stronger than ever; an explanation probably quite as annoying to her as the book had been. She never forgave it, and though Reeve was entitled to the K.C.B. for his long service as Clerk of Appeals to the Privy Councils, he never received the honour.

Reeve called upon the old Duchess of Cambridge one day, and found her much interested in the book, which was being read to her, she frequently adding further amusing recollections.

The second series of these memoirs was published in 1885, and the third series two years later. Reeve sent copies to Sir Henry Ponsonby, who laid them before the Queen, but she made no further sign.

Queen Victoria had no more interest in art and artists than she had in literature and authors; as the writer of the article in *The Quarterly Review* says, she never even "took the right kind of interest in the beautiful objects she possessed in her palaces, and it is mere courtly complaisance to pretend that she did." There were two or three German artists, such as Winterhalter and von Angeli, to whose work she was accustomed, and that their portraits were bad she never

could see. On being urged to sit to G. F. Watts, who would produce a splendid portrait, she replied, "Perhaps so, but I'm afraid it would be ugly."

Disraeli, however, had hanging in his dining-room a half-length copy of one of von Angeli's portraits of her, which she had presented to him, and which, as Lord Ronald Gower says, was a standing proof of her utter want of vanity, for it was almost a caricature.

Frankly, the Queen did not care for art, though she was always making little sketches, and though the Marquis de Foulon, a courtier as well as a Frenchman, who had taught her drawing in her girlhood, told her that, had she not been born to wear a crown, she would have made one of the best "female" artists of the age!

That her Majesty wielded the pen everybody knows, but not so many will remember the issue, about twenty years ago, of a terrible book, "published with the gracious permission and approval of" the Queen, and named *Her Majesty's Dolls*. No one with any artistic understanding could have allowed this to appear, but Mr. Harry Furniss, in his volume *Harry Furniss at Home*, puts the responsibility on other shoulders when he says: "*The Queen's Dolls* compliments the public by playing down to its limited understanding of art matters." Probably he was right, for the public, in spite of its occasional spasms of republicanism, is the essence of snobbery in matters royal.

## CHAPTER XX

### GLADSTONE AGAIN, ALAS !

“Oh, cry of Tory, cry of Rad,  
I hear you ere your time;  
The Tory shout is faint and sad,  
And suits an artless rhyme.  
Old England’s honour long is dead,  
Her wealth is like to die;  
The gilt is off the gingerbread,  
The bloom is off the rye.

To Radicals Trevelyan gave  
An eligible shout;  
Their funny banners wild they wave,  
And shriek and strut about;  
And still they clamour, ’midst applause,  
From stump and brake and van,  
We’re fighting for the same old cause,  
And for the same old man.”—*Punch.*

“Sackery-down, the Ministers frown,  
The Queen is again so far from town;  
She summons them up, she summons them down,  
Because she won’t travel to London town.”

*Contemporary Verse.*

THE year 1884 had been an arduous one for her Majesty’s Government, for as the demands for reform rose, so did the opposition to reform strengthen; as Irish discontent grew more bitter, so the more violent became its actions, and as violence begets violence, so the determination to increase coercion grew more energetic.

Lord Salisbury was the head of the Opposition, and

Lord Randolph Churchill had inspired a small but noisy party with his own views. It was under his clever initiative that the epidemic of "slumming" spread among the aristocracy, and ladies made a fashion of studying the most sordid aspects of London. Most of it was of no use, but after the first resentment the East-Enders grew to tolerate and then to like some of the efforts put forth to amuse and help them, and at least it proved that great ladies thought they looked upon them as human. Many of us remember the constant conjunction of the words "classes" and "masses." Even the Queen was drawn to the East End to open the People's Palace, and at least the movement gave a fillip to the Conservatives by impressing upon the poor that they had friends in that party.

The Bill for extending the County Franchise, which passed by a majority of one hundred and forty, was thrown out by the Lords, and Lord Salisbury consequently demanded that Parliament should be dissolved. Gladstone declared privately that if it did dissolve it should be upon organic change in the House of Lords, and there gradually arose much the same position as that which had obtained between the two Houses over the Irish Church Bill, and once again Victoria, half convinced that the reform was necessary, set herself to bridge the gulf between the Lords and the Commons, through Sir Henry Ponsonby, who was an unacknowledged statesman of a high order. Eventually Gladstone wrote "to tender his grateful thanks to your Majesty for the wise, gracious and steady influence on your Majesty's part, which has so

powerfully contributed to bring about this accomplishment and to avert a serious crisis." To which the Queen replied, "I gladly and thankfully return your telegrams. To be able to be of use is all I care to live for now." So they were both happy, and Ponsonby had the usual reward of virtue, which of course was not publicly mentioned.

Through all this the Sudan trouble continued, and this year General Stewart won, though with heavy loss, a victory over the Mahdi. The definite intention was to abandon the Sudan, but from one cause and another the evacuation had to be postponed. Some people, following the Queen, blame Gladstone for even dreaming of evacuation, but much money and many lives were already being thrown away to keep this possession for the Turks, who were not strong enough to keep it for themselves. When Lord Salisbury came into office, and until 1896, he resolutely resisted every attempt to make him change the policy laid down by Gladstone there. For he knew that it would have been suicidal to withdraw troops from India, where frontier wars were constantly occurring and a chronic state of unrest existed, to attempt the conquest of a country of such doubtful utility as the Sudan. When matters were ripe for action, however, he was prompt to take it.

A further difficulty for the Government was Ireland. "There lay Ireland—squalid, dismal, sullen, dull, expectant, sunk deep in hostile intent," says Lord Morley; a difficulty with which, as has been said, I cannot deal, and the answer to which has not yet

received the royal seal. Parnell had in 1885 found one key to the situation when he said that it would be for the Irish people in England and for the Irish members to decide at the next election whether a Tory or a Liberal Ministry should rule in England.

Gladstone wanted to give a measure of local government to our sister isle, but this was vetoed by members from both sides, and Lord Salisbury determined to placate Parnell by dropping Coercion, the two events in close conjunction being something of a satire on party politics. Every indication went to show that the Liberal Government was at the end of its resources. The Cabinet was in a constant state of division and resignation. All but three or four members separately tendered resignation, and some more than once. One Cabinet was said to have sat for four and a half hours debating whether they should resign, and Gladstone's casting vote then negatived it. At one time too, all the peers in the Cabinet voted one way and all the commoners another.

The Irish complicated affairs by dropping bombs about. At the end of January 1885 there was an effective explosion at the House of Commons, in which all the windows of Westminster Hall were blown out, a hole made at the top of the crypt below the steps in the great hall, the statues in the lobby hurled down, the gallery of the Commons shattered, the Speaker's chair ruined, and beams and glass shed all over the place—the destruction amounting to a policeman's life and £70,000. In May occurred explosions in St. James's Square and Scotland Yard, and an

unsuccessful attempt was made at the base of the Nelson Monument; while there was a further one near St. Thomas's Tower at the Tower of London, in which children were wounded.

Every one knew that a parliamentary change was at hand, and it came about nominally through a vote on duties upon spirits and beer, but not on wine, in the Budget discussion, actually through an alliance between the Tories and the Irish. The motion which produced it was made by Sir Michael Hicks Beach, under Lord Salisbury's direction, though Gladstone warned them that if it were carried it would mean the resignation of the Government.

This was in June, and ended what was one of the most anxious half years experienced in Parliament.

It was in this 1880-1885 Ministry that George Glyn (second Lord Wolverton) had a place. Of him it was said that he had a canine fidelity to Gladstone, so that he would at critical moments be anxiously watched, his face being a clue to what was happening. After one division some one said cheerfully, "Oh, it's all right, George Glyn has gone up to Gladstone wagging his tail." Glyn died in 1887, and the rumour went that he had left Gladstone £100,000, but the rumour was without justification, for Gladstone did not benefit at all under his friend's will.

Victoria had just attained her sixty-eighth birthday. She was getting old and could not alter ideas which had guided her for nearly a quarter of a century. She had followed her own sweet will all through, and intended still to do so, and probably never had she

been so much away from the centre of affairs as she was this year.

Let us follow her movements. At Christmas she was at Osborne, and had not left when the news arrived in February 1885 of the fall of Khartoum. Her feelings were then too bitter for her to contemplate Windsor, and she stayed on, making illness the excuse. When she felt anything keenly her nerves and general health would become affected, and the short journey across the Solent, though at a respectably reduced speed, tried her always after the tragic *Mistletoe* affair.

On March 18 she was in London, holding a Drawing-room, the first held by her since the early part of 1883; early in April she went to Aix-les-Bains and Darmstadt for a month, leaving urgent instructions with her Prime Minister that she should be constantly informed by telegraph of all important proceedings, and especially in reference to Egypt and the Sudan. This considerably added to the labours of men who were doing their best to govern her kingdom, and retarded events through loss of time in getting her replies.

In May she returned and held two more Drawing-rooms, and on the 21st of that month, when parliamentary affairs were in danger every day of collapsing, she started for Balmoral. An urgent request for a short delay, if only for a day or two, was refused, and before she had been many hours gone a special messenger had to follow her. She passed through England as usual in strict seclusion, the station plat-

forms being kept empty while her train ran through. At Perth a crowd was allowed to approach. It was the usual thing, and a very small thing, but it made people angry. At Balmoral, after paying an early visit to John Brown's grave, she lived her usual outdoor, restful life.

The defeat of the Government came on June 8, 1885, the news being received by her the next morning. There are various accounts as to how her Majesty took it. Sir Sidney Lee says that it was with "incalculable elation." On the other hand, she was considerably annoyed that it should have happened while she was at Balmoral, for she did not like any mental disturbance when on a holiday; therefore she made no effort to meet the situation, but carried out her plan of taking a long drive to Braemar, Glen Clunie and other places, returning to the castle late in the evening, expecting to hear that Gladstone had telegraphed an intention of being with her the next day. He, then seventy-six and feeling that his work was done, had decided against such a journey. The Queen was obliged to write to him on the 10th, when she declared her surprise that he should have made his defeat a vital question, and asked whether his Cabinet would not go on if Lord Salisbury refused to form a Government, which did not exactly look like "incalculable elation." She did not want Gladstone, and she did want Salisbury, but it seemed as though she wanted least of all to let a matter of national importance interfere with her holiday. Such an attitude could not escape comment, and there were many

public protests against her causing a ministerial crisis to last for weeks, when a few hours ought to have settled it. For one who protested so much that she was always thinking of and working for the good of her kingdom it *was* remarkable.

She was, however, extremely angry that Gladstone had not at once gone to her, and plainly told him so; showing little consideration or mercy for an old man who had for four months been working at high tension. He replied in effect that he was near the end of his life, that his ideas were probably coloured by the shortness of the future left him, and that he thought Lord Hartington, a younger man, "would be more useful in conversation with her Majesty." So Hartington prepared to go to Balmoral, but the Queen countermanded this, accepted the resignations, and summoned Lord Salisbury to the Highlands.

Now that Lord Salisbury was face to face with the situation he, as Disraeli, did not like it; he would have to depend upon coalition with the Irish, and however welcome they were in defeating the Government they might be dangerous as coadjutors, so he recommended that Gladstone should be invited to reconsider his decision. This the latter refused to do. Lord Salisbury had led the great quarrel over reform between the Lords and the Commons; under his opposition had been engineered a most determined system of obstruction, and he had done his utmost to defeat the Government on its Budget. "If an Opposition defeat a Government, they must be prepared to accept responsibility for their action," said Gladstone

to the Queen. Then Salisbury demanded promises of support as to finance, time and other matters, and Gladstone again refused—it was on finance that Salisbury had eagerly overthrown him!

The interregnum continued, for though Gladstone told the Queen that there would be no attempt to embarrass the new ministers, Salisbury was still afraid of taking office, and it is not surprising, as, Irish uncertainties aside, he would have a majority against him, and also as Irish affairs were causing acute difficulties in his own party. “The Queen was most gracious and I thought most reasonable,” said Gladstone, after an interview on June 18, her Majesty having returned to Windsor the day before. On the 20th Ponsonby was with Gladstone again, on the 22nd he paid him no less than six visits; on the 23rd the Queen impressed upon Salisbury that he might reasonably accept Gladstone’s assurances, and urged her earnest desire to bring the crisis to an end. So after sixteen days in the doldrums the ship of State was again in motion under what came to be known as the Stop-Gap Government, for a dissolution was fixed for November.

All being ended, the Queen wrote a perfectly charming letter to Gladstone, again offering him a peerage. “She wishes to offer him an earldom, as a mark of her recognition of his long and distinguished services, and she believes and thinks he would thereby be enabled still to render great service to his sovereign and country.”

Gladstone said that the letter moved and almost upset him. “It must have cost her much to write, and

it is really a pearl of great price." As every one knows he did not accept the proffered honour which would have crippled his work.

The Queen now turned her thoughts to Osborne, going there after the settlement, and being engrossed in Princess Beatrice's wedding. She came thence to Windsor in August to entertain Duke Alexander and his wife Princess Battenberg. On the 24th of that month she started for Balmoral, and remained there until November 17, and a month later went again to Osborne.

Now this is the amount of time spent by the English Queen in her castle twenty miles from London : March and a few days of April, two weeks in May, two weeks in June, two weeks in August, and one month near the end of the year, between three and four months altogether, of which about four days had been spent in Buckingham Palace. The fact was that she still hated the essential part of her life as queen as much as she loathed Windsor, and this autumn, though she only returned there under great pressure on November 17, her spirits fell instantly, so that by the beginning of December she was reported to be deeply depressed—a part of which depression may have been caused by the election results. She had not found Lord Salisbury so docile to her whims as had been Lord Beaconsfield, for he, like Gladstone, attached more importance to her position as head of the State than did her favourite minister.

The elections were begun on November 23rd, and Salisbury appointed a Council meeting for the 18th.

The Queen, however, said that she did not intend to return south before that date, and if a Privy Council was necessary, then it would have to be held at Balmoral. Salisbury, however, was firm; the 18th was the very last day on which the Council could be held before the elections, and his representations were strong enough to make Victoria give up a few days of her holiday, and save a large body of her loyal helpers from the wearisome journey to and from Scotland.

The election was virtually fought on the Irish question. Parnell demanded some form of Home Rule, Salisbury declared definitely for the reform if not the repeal of the Coercion Act. Gladstone, who foresaw that Ireland would be the essential question in the new Parliament, offended Parnell by refusing to formulate any scheme; while Hartington and Chamberlain definitely declared against any Irish plan at all. Parnell decided to throw his weight on the side of Salisbury, with results which were embarrassing to every one. The Liberals stood at 333, the Conservatives at 251, and the Parnellites at 86 on the side of the Conservatives, so that the latter could count a majority of four in a full house. But it meant Gladstone being called once again to power. No wonder Victoria was depressed in spirits in December!

Things had not gone well with her this year, but in more than one respect the reason lay with herself. She was far too careful with her money in England; she spent nothing on dress, on hospitality or on State functions, and on the other hand there were constantly little bills put before the parliamentary finance com-

mittee for payment. Thus when our present king was given the Garter in March, £548 was demanded to pay the expense, and there was the same for Prince Henry, then £360 was asked for steamboats to carry royalties between Dover and Calais; her steam yacht, *Victoria and Albert*, which she used scarcely four times a year, was repaired and decorated at a public cost of £50,000, and as she had four or five such yachts people began to make inquiries into the annual cost of these, and found it to be, including the pay of officers and sailors, very large. In June there was another foolish little matter which provoked comment and amusement. Some ardent Egyptian admirer made Victoria a present of a donkey for the little carriage which she used in the grounds of her residences. It was to be sent from Suez, so a transport waited there with steam up for days, until the deliberate animal eventually appeared, the cost of the waiting being about £150 per day.

A small matter concerned with the Civil List was also revived, showing that four or five people who had helped to educate the Queen, and who were pensioned in 1840, were still receiving £100 a year each; one had taught her drawing, another dancing, others music, German and Italian. Two years later the Marquis de Foulon died, thus releasing one hundred pounds. One feels some shame that these small sums were the subject of public comment, but, on the other hand, had her Majesty shown generosity with her own money as well as that of the nation, half these grumbles would never have been uttered.

In the autumn of 1885 a rumour spread that Victoria had invested a million pounds in ground rents in the City, which rumour Ponsonby denied by asserting that the Queen had not such a sum to invest. Upon which busybodies declared that though she might not have got it then she had had it, and published proofs of property bought, one cited being St. Mary Chambers in St. Mary Axe, for which £46,250, that is twenty-five years' purchase, had been paid, the deal having been completed on June 6, 1878, in her Majesty's name by cheques on Coutts's Bank. Other examples followed, and though no one could prove the existence of such a sum as one million, it was everywhere believed.

Indeed it was a season of complaint, and the society papers got warm over the paucity of Drawing-rooms, State balls and concerts held by the Queen. It was a fair grumble, for when she did once or twice in the year summon visitors to her palace, those ladies who had been weeping because they were not invited had occasion to weep because they were; for the opportunities being so few the Drawing-rooms were crowded as in the very worst days of palace mismanagement. All the archaic customs were also adhered to, the carriages not being allowed to stand at the door long enough for the owners to reach them, and if they were not actually on the spot these poor tired women would see their vehicle roll away to complete the whole round again, while they might have to stand an hour or more, faint with thirst and fatigue. Through the papers they implored that at least a cup of tea should be

offered them by their royal hostess, but the petition was in vain.

To this recrudescence of complainings the Queen turned her usual indifferent ear, and invoked the usual exasperation of her people. Had she been less self-absorbed and less obstinate, she could have swept the whole thing away as a cobweb is swept down, but she refused ; she must adhere to the line she had laid down for herself. In actual fact she did more than that, she bent the line inwards, as it were, retreating with it, and thus keeping her people at a greater distance. She could be kindhearted to individuals, death could always bring tears to her eyes and a beautiful letter of sympathy from her pen to a mourner, but her lack of imagination left her cold as stone to the requests of a community.

In the case of soldiers this indifference warmed into thoughtfulness, and an anecdote is told of a visit she made to Netley Hospital in 1883, when she observed to the authority near her that she should like to see more armchairs in the wards.

“Only one armchair to a ward is allowed by the regulation, your Majesty,” was the reply.

“I was not speaking of regulations, but of armchairs,” was the quick retort.

In some vague way Victoria associated Gladstone with these ebullitions of public criticism, for these discomforts seemed to happen under his rule; and though Salisbury was actually in power when this latest outburst occurred, there was a Liberal majority in the House. Thus she was keenly troubled over the

1885 elections, and went down to Osborne, after the mourning rituals of December 14, with a heavy heart; the more so that Gladstone had outlined his Home Rule policy to her early in the month, and she felt that another political fight was imminent, and one in which she saw no saving grace at all on the Home Rule side.

I remember the discussions against the royal family of that period, the popular and vehement talk, the speeches at street corners and the wild bets made that if the then Prince of Wales was ever allowed to become king, his son never should be. This was generally flavoured with stories of the wonderful wealth which the Queen had saved from the taxes imposed upon the people, and the vast sums that she had spent over German princes both in England and on the Continent. There were also other stories which had leaked through some chink in the iron wall of reserve which the Prince Consort had built round the domestic life of the palace, stories of the Queen's arbitrariness, of her excessive demands upon her ladies, the long hours of standing in her presence so that occasionally one fainted at her post, of capricious dislikes and ladies being suddenly dismissed simply because she had wearied of them, or they had proved physically unequal to the labour demanded. Thirty years ago these things were said, and the writer of the article in *The Quarterly Review* of 1901 substantiates some of them.

It goes without saying that Victoria refused to understand that her own attitude under a Liberal Govern-

ment was the real cause of the disaffection, that she shut herself up more rigidly than when the Conservatives were in power and showed far less consideration all round. Thus, not having opened a Liberal session for twenty years, she returned in 1886 from Osborne before January 21, to go to the House of Lords in semi-state to support Salisbury.

On his defeat Salisbury, who had all the grit of his race, showed no intention of refusing to meet Parliament, as Disraeli had done ten years earlier, and he occupied the Ministerial bench when the House opened, but five days later he was outvoted, and the parties changed sides. Gladstone had prepared a scheme for municipal Home Rule in Ireland without prejudice to Imperial Unity and interests, and on March 15, 1886, there came into being the notable new party, the Liberal-Unionists, under Joseph Chamberlain, the ultra-Radical. Thus there were four parties in the House. Chamberlain and his group, Hartington, the Whig, and his followers, Salisbury and the Tories and Gladstone and the Liberals. The first three met to discuss the situation and lay their plans, and on June 7 the first Home Rule Bill was rejected.

After winding up the debate and while the House was cleared for division, Gladstone sat on the Treasury bench and with calm face began writing his letter on his knees to the Queen. This daily letter at the end of a long and exciting debate must always have been something of a tax upon a weary and harassed minister.

It was a curious characteristic of Victoria that, when

it suited her, she played with the conventions of parliamentary custom. Home Rule was dead and out of the way. There had recently been an election, and though her minister was repugnant to her, he could now do little harm, so she decided that another election was unnecessary. It was, she said, a needless disturbance of her own and the country's peace. Gladstone, however, saw in resignation rather than dissolution simply an abandonment of the Irish cause, a showing of the white feather, as he told the Queen, and he dissolved without delay.

During the preceding weeks Victoria had suffered from every emotion of disgust and nervous tension. To give the Irish any voice in their own affairs, to allow them any kind of local government meant to her, as it has done to a large number of her subjects who have never studied the suggestions put forth, a disruption of her empire, a breaking of her coronation oath, a handing of Ireland over to America, and a number of other absurd and impossible calamities. Much the same things were said about self-government for South Africa, and had the Government then in power listened, the Boers would, as one nation, in this year of 1915, have joined our German foes, and Africa would have been the scene of a terrible war.

All along Victoria had definitely expounded her views about her Prime Minister and his Bill to every one with whom she came in contact, and she consciously headed the Opposition, so the defeat brought her great joy, and when the new Parliament showed a Unionist majority of 110 and she had to take leave

of Gladstone she was beaming. He had spent fifty-five years in political life, and twenty-five years in office, and her sole remark personal to him at the leave-taking was that he would require some rest. The greater part of the conversation was devoted to a discussion of the means to be employed to secure grants, dowries and pensions for the third generation of her family. She was glad to be rid of him, but she was quick to seize the opportunity of enlisting his help for her personal affairs.

"I remember," said Gladstone, "that on a closing audience in 1874 she said she felt sure I might be reckoned upon to support the Throne. She did not say anything of the sort to-day. Her mind and opinions have since that day been seriously warped, and I respect her for the scrupulous avoidance of anything which could have seemed to indicate a desire on her part to claim anything in common with me."

Yet she was ready to grasp at this opportunity of ensuring his future support!

During the election Gladstone took the unusual course of speaking in many large centres, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester and others, and the Queen remonstrated with him in what Lord Morley called "a gracious and frank letter from Balmoral." To which he replied, "He must state frankly what it is that has induced him thus to yield (to importunity for speeches). It is that, since the death of Lord Beaconsfield, the Leaders of the Opposition have established a rule of what may be called popular agitation, by addressing public meetings from time to time at places with which

they were not connected. This method was peculiarly marked in the case of Lord Salisbury as a peer, and this change on the part of the Leaders of the Opposition has induced Mr. Gladstone to deviate on this critical occasion from the rule which he had generally or universally observed in former years. . . . Your Majesty will be the first to perceive that, even if it had been possible for him to decline this great contest, it was not possible for him, having entered upon it, to conduct it in a half-hearted manner, or to omit the use of any means requisite in order to place (what he thinks) the true issue before the country."

So was legalized, as it were, the custom of ministers and their opponents speaking all over the country.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE QUEEN ALIVE ONCE MORE

"She did not struggle knowingly against principles; she did not conceive of them. She struggled solely against men who displeased her. . . . Queen, in good faith she defended royalty. It was her rôle. To reproach Victoria because, being on the throne, she had not enough intelligence and foresight to put the interest and future good of the nation before what she considered as the interest and immediate good of her country, of her function, of her person, would be to reproach her for not having combined heroism and genius in her soul."—Abel Chevalley: '*La Reine Victoria.*'

"The hurrahs were yet ascending from our jubilating lips."—*De Quincey: 'Autobiographical Sketches.'*

THERE had already been in the winter of 1885 talk of the rejoicings which it was hoped would be made on the attainment of the fiftieth year of Victoria's reign, and the hint of such a thing caused her pleasure, even though it occurred when Lord Salisbury was being turned out of power, and swelled into popular favour under Gladstone. There was about it a suggestion of peace and good feeling which she hailed gladly, and her sensible suggestion that it should be held on the completion of the fiftieth year was accepted by all as a proof of her strength and confidence.

She was, indeed, in better health, both of body and mind; the poisonous depression and self-absorption which had held her for twenty-five years and rendered

her a nonentity in her own capital was at last being effectively conquered, and for the first time she seemed really to become aware that any unpopularity from which she had suffered had some relation to her own attitude. Thus 1886 saw the beginning of a revolution in her life, brought about in the first place by a desire to lead the fight against a measure which she opposed with every sentiment of her being.

The keenness of her feeling against Home Rule led her to look for methods of impressing her ideas upon the people, and she could think only of that "personal influence" which she had so long scorned. In realizing this she also began to see that she had deliberately thrown aside many golden opportunities. So she armed herself for the conflict, and the fight was begun by her appearance at the opening of Parliament in January 1886, and though five days later Gladstone succeeded to the Chair of State, she constantly appeared in public during the session. In February she went to a great concert at the Albert Hall; in March she laid the foundation-stone of the Medical Examination Hall on the Embankment, actually replying herself to the address presented to her. When, in 1882, she had opened the Royal Courts of Justice, the programme included a short opening speech by herself; but as the moment approached she began to look very unhappy, and, beckoning Sir William Harcourt, talked earnestly to him—every one thinking that he was getting a scolding. The fact was that she was suddenly stricken with deadly nervousness, and was telling him that she could not

utter the briefest sentence, and commanding him to do it for her. In May she opened the great Colonial and Indian Exhibition (the "Colindries") at South Kensington, the inception of which was due to the Prince of Wales. She did things now, not as a prisoner dragged to the task, but with a will; and in this instance decided upon a magnificent state ceremonial, which awoke enthusiasm in the souls of those who love a show. From Paddington to South Kensington she drove through huzzaing crowds. At the exhibition she was received with a blare of trumpets and the National Anthem, by a host of people brilliant in garb and many of them brilliant in reputation. Her throne in the amphitheatre was of hammered gold (once in the possession of the East India Company; one wonders how they got it!), and the canopy was of Indian cloth-of-gold, its hangings looped with gold chains and pendants of Delhi work.

It was all very gorgeous and inspiring, and the Queen once more did what for twenty-five years she had refused to do except over a tomb or a statue: she gave voice to her own reply to the address. She had at last found her feet, and seemed determined henceforth to walk on them, and not to be for ever begging her people to carry her.

Later she held a review at Aldershot to do honour to her Indian and Colonial visitors, asked them to lunch at Windsor, and gave a party there to the overseas workers at the exhibition. But she forgot that all this goodwill had been made possible by the policy of past Governments who recognized the

autonomous principle of Colonial government, the very principle which, when applied to Ireland, she thought would be disruptive of her empire.

A week after the opening of the exhibition she paid a long-promised and long-delayed visit to Liverpool. She stayed there three days and two nights, and though it rained intolerably all through one of those days she stuck to the programme, and drove in an open carriage through the streets. Well might she have a wonderful and glorious welcome! Returning thence to Windsor, she then took her usual holiday at Balmoral, and at the end of June was ready to open the Royal Holloway College at Egham. Think of it, a college for women! In addition to all these functions she held Drawing-rooms and State concerts in London, and ordered various other levees, balls and assemblies to take place. The whole royal family were allowed to wake up at last, the various princes and princesses being kept busy with the public events which have since become recognized as part of their duties; giving their blessings to new bridges, schools and institutions, and to various celebrations.

In August the Queen went from Osborne to Edinburgh, staying at Holyrood Palace, and visiting the Edinburgh International Exhibition, where complimentary addresses passed between the Queen and the Lords Provost of Edinburgh and Glasgow. From Holyrood to Balmoral she went, and thence in the first week of November to Windsor, where, on the 23rd of the same month, Princess Beatrice bore a son. This last occurrence necessitated Christmas being

spent at Windsor—the second time since her widowhood. It was kept cheerfully, too, with all the usual Christmas accessories, and “a jolly tuck-in” for the Bluecoat School boys, though, for some reason, the aids to warmth, both internal and external, for the poor were not distributed until the New Year. On the last day of the month her Majesty flitted to Osborne, and stayed there well over the opening of Parliament.

By six months’ activity Victoria had almost slain the dragons of discontent and revolt. In 1885 it was popularly reported that Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, did not hope to be king, which was probably true; one remembers that little sentence he uttered at the close of his life: “Well, there will be one more king, in any case.” By the end of 1886, thanks to the resuscitation of energy in the Queen, he had a sporting chance. There were and are, of course, always with us those who disapprove of royalty by reason rather than by sentiment, and these, now that the danger of royal aggrandisement of power under German tutelage has disappeared, are tolerant enough.

The Queen and her eldest son were never close friends, and for long Victoria had found so much to criticize in Alexandra that by this date their affection for each other was much more equable when they were apart. It is quite understandable. Queen Victoria, in spite of Bismarck’s spiteful criticisms, was a perfect and, from the feminine point of view, admirable specimen of a German *frau*. She considered that the chief duties of a woman were to be prolific, to adore her



*Photo*

*W. & D. Downey*

KING EDWARD VII AS PRINCE OF WALES



husband, to dress soberly, manage economically, and to forswear intellect. Alexandra never interfered in State matters, nor made a cult of intellectual pursuits, but she had that which carries a woman a long way: infinite social charm and knowledge, coupled with a self-sacrificing patience which Victoria utterly lacked; she had had a fair number of children, but the opportunity for marital adoration had seldom been given her, and there had been times when matters in the "Social Court" were distinctly strained. The great fault which the Queen found in her, however, was that, though she was the mother of adult children, she did not walk in the way of the Prince Consort's precepts. She allowed no one to say, "That you shall not wear!" and she did not dress according to what her mother-in-law considered was a style suitable to one who might have been a grandmother. She was still the best-dressed and the most graceful woman at Court, and retained an appearance of youth which her own eldest daughter could not rival.

Another sore point had been that—in common with the Crown Princess in Prussia—she had, in conjunction with her husband, utterly turned her back upon the Stockmar-Albertian ideal of education for royal children. The Prince of Wales had always determined that his children should not suffer from the nervousness and cramped effect which his upbringing had entailed upon himself, with its consequent overpowering self-consciousness; and his boys were sent to school, while his girls led a natural home life, unfettered by a profundity of mock respect for their

high-born parents. They also were allowed to observe the continental rather than the British Sabbath.

A further cause of friction between the two ladies was that the Queen shuddered at the name of Gladstone, while the Princess most undutifully liked him; a liking in which the Prince shared, whether he did or did not always agree with the Grand Old Man's policy, which, however, was never known. Gladstone once told Lord Ronald Gower that no royalty that he had ever known—"but my experience is limited"—had such charm and tact as the Prince of Wales.

In 1883 Gladstone had been one of a party with Tennyson and Browning to go a cruise to Denmark, and had been made much of by the royal family there; a matter which drew a sharp reproof from Victoria, in that Gladstone—the locality of the cruise being unpremeditated—had not first received her permission to go near Denmark. On his side the statesman was a courtier to the finger-tips where the Princess was concerned, as, indeed, he also was to the Queen: "Nothing could be more charming than the deference he paid to the Princess, and the pleasure she always showed in his company."

Gladstone always expressed delight over his intercourse with the Prince, whom he yearly invited to his annual Royal Birthday dinner, being much troubled over it in 1886 because the many splits in Parliament made him fear that most of the chief men would refuse the invitation, and he would be shamed before the Prince and Albert Victor, who was to be his guest for the first time; however, his old comrades showed better

sense, and the dinner was a success. The Queen had an absolute abhorrence of tobacco, a dislike which Gladstone shared, but he, knowing what a victim to the nicotine fiend was Albert Edward, always gave his Royal Highness the lead by lighting a cigarette.

Victoria had in early days been most severe with her son over this habit, absolutely forbidding him to smoke in any of the royal residences; and when on one occasion the youthful prince transgressed he was sentenced to remain in his rooms for a month, a punishment rigorously enforced. Such punishments were customary in German royal families, and are still inflicted by the Kaiser on the slightest excuse upon one or other of his many relatives.

This prohibition extended to visitors at the castle, even to the dine-and-sleep-one-night visitors, and there are amusing anecdotes of noted men lying on the hearthrug to smoke up the chimney, or resorting to other sly ways of getting a luxurious whiff. *Punch* declared in 1863 that so strictly were the rules against it carried out that the very chimneys received intimation from the Lord Chamberlain that they would be expected to consume their own smoke. And further back, in the early days of his marriage, the Prince Consort was thus interdicted, it needing many a struggle before his beloved pipe became regarded as part of his lawful possessions.

Before his marriage Prince Henry of Battenberg smoked in bed or in his bedroom; but he had not been long a Benedick before he was allowed far greater latitude than had ever been extended to his brother-

in-law, or even to the deceased and beloved prince himself. But by this time the Queen had attained something in breadth of view on this subject, as on many others.

In 1886 the Battenberg question had become again acute. Alexander of Bulgaria was continuing his series of quarrels with Russia, and Queen Victoria warmly took up his side; the Blue Book on Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia recording her opinion that if he succeeded in once more grasping the reins of power with a steady hand, and again stood forth as the constitutional head of a law-abiding state, the people of England would probably be deeply moved and "would scarcely look on with indifference should an attempt be made from without to disturb this state of things": which was something like a hint of war, as well as a promise which the people of England would scarcely have honoured.

Alexander was very handsome, and this, coupled with his misfortunes, was sufficient to capture Victoria's heart. At one time news concerning him could not be secured, and she sent repeated anxious messages to Darmstadt, to which at last arrived an answer that the hero was suffering from typhoid, though the illness turned out to be smallpox. He recovered, and when he came to England in the early summer he was, by the Queen's orders, received with royal honours by the garrisons and fleet; the cause of this being that Victoria was seeking to settle him matrimonially, and report had it that Princess Louise of Wales was the chosen lady, also the widowed Duchess of Albany

was mentioned; but later every one knew that it was Princess Victoria of Prussia, the Queen's granddaughter and sister to the present kaiser.

There was some indignation over Prince Louis of Battenberg at this time, as he had been made commander of the *Dreadnought*, first ship of its species, over the heads of a large number of senior officers, even though he had been judged medically unfit. In this matter Victoria had personally intervened, insisting upon his appointment, the reason being that until he had had a year's command he could not get the rank of captain.

In the same year Henry was appointed aide-de-camp to the Queen, a position which carried with it a colonelcy in the Army and its pay, and he became colonel of the Isle of Wight (Princess Beatrice's) battalion of Rifles. It was popularly asserted that the mantle of John Brown had fallen upon the shoulders of this favourite son-in-law, and that the fishing and shooting so long reserved for the exclusive use of the servant were now reserved for the prince.

At Osborne the Queen made a new departure in February 1887, by having the Kendal and Hare company to act before her, and she was so pleased that she gave a valuable brooch to Mrs. Kendal. Six years earlier she had seen a theatrical performance, the first of her widowhood, when at Abergeldie the Prince and Princess of Wales arranged the play of Burnand's *The Colonel*. The Queen also commanded some of the Windsor clerics to journey to Osborne to preach

before her, though it was quite easy for her to hear them when at the castle; and in January, during very cold weather, her statesmen had to make the long journey to consult with her.

At the end of February she returned to Windsor Castle for about six weeks, and arranged two Drawing-rooms for March, during which month she actually spent ten days in London—probably the first successive ten days for nearly forty years. This succeeded a visit to Birmingham, where she had been enthusiastically received.

The Drawing-rooms, though held at Buckingham Palace, were crowded, but her Majesty did not now feel equal to going through the whole ceremony, and after about eighty presentations had been made slipped away, her place being taken by the Princess of Wales. To lessen the fatigue the Queen had arranged for her comfort a high stool, upon which she half sat, half leaned, while retaining the appearance of standing. Her fondness for her grandchildren had let her permit half a dozen of them, including Princess Beatrice's baby in the arms of a nurse, to stand by the doorway, where the ladies' trains were unfolded and spread before their interested eyes.

The children were the delight of the Queen's life, and they loved her as children can love an indulgent, understanding grandmother. What a pity it is that so many parents have to grow old before they lose the red-tapism of parentage, in which they are even more tangled to-day than they were in the Queen's youth, for babies are no longer budding individuals,

but puppets in some one's—generally Germanic—system.

In April Queen Victoria, Princess Beatrice and Prince Henry went to Cannes and Aix-les-Bains for a month, necessitating the passing to and fro of Queen's Messengers at Easter to obtain her signature to parliamentary bills, and the consequent remaining in town for three days of ministers who might have been off for the Easter recess. By May the arrangements for the Jubilee were well advanced, and though the Queen was too busy to hold the Drawing-rooms herself, she was several times in town. Once she went to inspect the atrocious mauling of Westminster Abbey which was in progress, and followed this by attending a performance by Buffalo Bill at the Wild West Show.

She arrived at the latter place soon after five o'clock, accompanied by the Battenbergs, in a carriage and four, with outriders in scarlet; and other carriages followed her. Some of her friends went in the "Dreadnought" coach, which was driven at the gallop round the arena while Indians attacked it, and a tremendous amount of bogus firing went on; all of which affected her into a state of radiant delight, so that at the close Buffalo Bill, the Indian chief and two of the squaws with their little painted papooses were presented. How much healthier mentally she would have been had she oftener enjoyed simple things like this; and also how much more exhilarating would it have been for her that day had she seen the whole gallery of seats filled with her happy subjects,

instead of being empty by her orders so that the performance might be private to herself.

On a Saturday in May her Majesty went in grand procession to open the People's Palace in the East End, and most divergent accounts were given in the papers of her reception. On the one hand it was said that the enthusiasm was intense, on the other that she was coldly, even sullenly, received, derisive shouts being heard at some points. The cheers, it was said, came from the window-holders, and the sullenness was caused by the fact that the tradesmen had petitioned for another day, as Saturday was the most important day for their business, the response from the Secretary's office being that "her Majesty was not pleased to signify any commands thereon."

It was a trying journey for more than one person, for Fenianism was still to the fore, and dynamite not long discarded as a weapon; and the East End was regarded—in spite of the philanthropists—as the source of all metropolitan violence. The Queen could not be sure that all would go well, and Henry of Battenberg was, justly or unjustly, said to give open evidence of being in a blue funk.

There had been many Jubilee suggestions made. The Prince of Wales proposed the ill-fated Imperial Institute, which gained little favour from the first. Some suggested the repeal of the Royal Marriage Act; more advanced people referred to an earlier rumour and suggested that the Queen should resign in favour of her son. Others were bolder still, and openly said that Victoria herself should return thanks

to God by giving something to her country. The Rev. Arthur Robins, Rector of Holy Trinity, Windsor, and familiarly known as the Soldiers' Bishop, thought it would be a noble act if the pestilential spots of Windsor should be cleansed and healthy houses built for the poor, for no place in England was so fever-stricken as the district which lay around the royal castle. Some one suggested that all women should contribute and form a Women's Jubilee Fund.

Of all these proposals only the first and the last were carried out, and the public languidly subscribed to both. Baroness Burdett Coutts heaped coals of fire on her sovereign's head by presiding at a large meeting in London to start the Women's Fund idea, for the Queen had shown a very broad back to her since her marriage. The fund being well started, Victoria nearly killed it by announcing her intention of building a new memorial to Prince Albert with it! Purses shut up with a snap at the very idea. This coming to the ears of her Majesty, as well as the want of enthusiasm about the Imperial Institute, caused her much distress. So nothing further was said about the statue, and the sum rolled up to about £80,000, of which only £3000 was used for a bronze equestrian statue to the Prince, later set up in Windsor Park. The great bulk of the gift the Queen devoted to founding an institute for training nurses as attendants on the sick poor in their homes, and some of the ladies nearly wept because her Majesty did not keep a trifle to buy herself a personal ornament in commemoration of the glad event.

The late Arthur W. à Beckett did his utmost with Cardinal Manning to get the Golden Rose for her Majesty from the Pope, but she was outside the Church, and the end of it was that the Cardinal murmured, with a smile, to his interviewer, "The dear lady has received a very beautiful mosaic from Rome. It would have been the Golden Rose had it been possible."<sup>1</sup>

In return for this and for the Pope's courtesy in sending a representative to the Jubilee, Victoria sent for the Papal Jubilee the following year a golden ewer and basin.

One of the many presents sent to Queen Victoria was a carriage rug of feathers gathered from the sea-birds of Heligoland, that valuable isle which with such lavish prodigality she later thrust into the hands of her beloved grandson, the War Lord. This present reminds me of that sent ten years earlier by the Empress of Brazil of a dress made of spiders' webs, with which the handsomest silk could not compare either in quality or beauty, and which was made from the strong threads woven by a large species of South American arachnid.

The previous year the Queen had pleased India by attaching two Indian attendants to her service, and now she added an Indian gentleman, the Munshi Abdul Karim, as Groom of the Chamber, with a special duty of teaching her Hindustani. She was doing her best to bind the empire safely round her throne; but what might she not have done had she started on this

<sup>1</sup> Arthur W. à Beckett: *The à Becketts of 'Punch.'*

course twenty-five years earlier? And, by the way, through all these distractions and engagements where were the noted dispatch boxes which were supposed daily to take up the whole of her time? It must be hoped that with her growing sense of fitness she had banished all but the most important. This suggests the further idea of how much easier and more pleasant a time the Marquis of Salisbury had in office than had ever the G.O.M., whose Government she harassed daily, and sometimes hourly, over matters small and great. "The nation at large knew nothing of difficulties at Windsor," says Lord Morley of Victoria's relations with a Liberal Government.

The Indians created some confusion at times, especially when they were travelling. "Sir Henry, disquieted about Indian attendants, whose castes required three separate apartments," noted the train superintendent; "however, only two were to be had." This remark occurs various times in comments upon the journeys, which were occasionally touched with gleams of humour. Thus in 1892 a pungent smell of hot oil arose, but no one could find its origin; and at Forfar the train had to pull up.

"The Queen wants to know what gars this stink!" was the question of John Brown's brother. It was found to be due to a faulty locomotive, which had to be detached. During the popularity of Sarah Grand's work one of her Majesty's ladies, arriving at Windsor, was greatly distressed because she had lost "the heavenly twins," and she was sure she had had them during the night in the sleeping-saloon.

The Queen often dined at Perth, and it is curious to think of her at table in a room at the Station Hotel there dining from gold plate, brought for her use from Tynemouth Castle by her faithful subject Lord Breadalbane. It gives a touch of colour in keeping with the royal saloon, covered with blue and white silks. When G. P. Neede had taken her a hundred times to and fro, Victoria presented him with a chiming clock in recognition of his services for thirty-one years, and when he soon after retired he had an audience of her and received a valuable present.

In 1887 the Queen remained four weeks at Balmoral, trying to calm her nerves for the great ceremony before her, for she was in no very happy or confident mood. In fact, she dreaded the day of Jubilee; she feared its fatigues, for she had allowed herself a chronic belief in the delicacy of her health, and she feared assassination. This will seem impossible to some, yet she had had more pistols pointed at her than she had fingers on one hand; and though we are, in common with most nations, conscious of our own rectitude, she had some reason for her fear. How often had a storm of indignation risen around her from the ranks of her people? and what had she ever given to Ireland but her approval of harsh measures and insensate punishment for a moral illness brought on by oppression? What a target might not her glittering procession be for dynamite?

The incessant discussions over clothes, guests, gifts and arrangement left her irritable and worn, so that on her return to Windsor she was in a bad state of

nervous excitement. She had to include guests whom she did not want, whose morals offended her, and she felt no peace in anything, only ardently wishing that all were over.

The day came at its appointed time, and passed; many have written about it, some with strong criticism and others with a happy faculty for universal admiration. One declared that her Majesty never looked more cheerful and it was impossible to pick a hole in any of the arrangements for this great and superb show. Yet it was not so great and superb as it might have been, for the state carriage was not used, and there were other things which made it, despite its uniqueness, only a semi-state procession.

Why? you may ask. Well, because her Majesty was a very careful and economical person, and the supreme moment of her age could not temper these qualities. Had she gone in full state the throne and the plate used would by ancient custom have become the property of the Lord Grand Chamberlain; and that was not to be thought of!

There were those who said that the Queen looked radiant, but Professor Blackie's evidence was that "in the last carriage was the Queen herself, whether sweet or glum I could not say. Certainly she did not look radiant. But though a good woman and an excellent wife and a model mother, she never did look sublimely regal even in her best days. So I was not disappointed."

Then, too, as to the declaration that no fault could be found, William Allingham wrote in his diary:

"Foreign kings in *covered* carriages—long wait; soldiers march off—all over? No; here come the Indian princes—some in livery stables turnout; two hansoms—mismanagement somewhere."

The truth about the Queen's expression was that it differed at different stages; at first she was exceedingly nervous, and one reporter said that "at Waterloo Place her timorous agitation was pitiable, her mouth twitching." Coming back she felt reassured, her countenance was brighter and she showed a joyful, emotional excitement.

The ten thousand people gathered in Westminster Abbey saw only the pathos and the gaiety of the memorable scene. Most of them only caught a passing view of her Majesty, but the small proportion who could look down upon the central spot of interest saw a little old woman sitting alone in a square space in an ancient chair whose historic framework had been hidden by cloth of gold; before her being a *prie-dieu* so tall that no one under six feet high could use it.

"She sat alone, how terribly alone in the vast crowd, and with what memories of the past thronging about her, a moment that I am not at all ashamed to say made me feel disposed to weep out of sympathy and reverence. There were many people in the galleries in front and immediately right and left staring straight in her face through opera glasses. It was not a part of the Steward's duties to stop such vulgarities, or how gladly one would have done it!"<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Coronation. Article in The Nineteenth Century and After.* By Somers Clark.

Fashions and manners had certainly changed for the worse since Victoria opened her first Parliament, and Lady Jersey raised general indignation in her own class by using opera glasses.

At some distance, facing the Queen, sat the foreign kings and princes; on her right stood the royal princes and on her left the princesses. When the service was over these defiled before her, and she kissed all but the Crown Prince of Germany and Prince Louis of Hesse; and when they had all passed she remembered that she had made a difference, and had those two called back that they also might receive the royal salute.

When the Queen returned to Buckingham Palace after the long hours of driving she received a message from the aged Duchess of Cambridge hoping she was not tired; and her answer was—

“I am too happy to be tired.”

There was a painful side to this day of rejoicing, and one which centred in the Abbey itself. To the undiscriminating the interior of that marvellous building gave no jarring shock; the brilliant uniforms and gorgeous dresses, filling every available space from the floor to the roof, hid the poor decorations and made a picture of beauty. But to those who knew and loved the Abbey, behind all the extraneous glow and colour lay the most revolting desecration, indignity and callous disregard of real beauty.

Thus when her Majesty alighted from her carriage, in place of entering the Abbey through a great open door beneath the high roof soaring above her head,

instead of seeing at once before her the solemn and noble interior, one of the most splendid things the world can show, she found herself in a little dark passage some ten feet high, crushed down beneath the feet of many of her subjects. *The Times* declared that the effect was that of a circus, the horses coming into the ring under a red baize box with a braying band in it : " That was the place of entry of the august Lady in whose reverence we had all assembled."

The arrangements of the Abbey had been taken out of the hands of all the responsible Abbey officials, who knew the building's capabilities, its weak spots and what it could bear, and given entirely over to a firm of respectable undertakers, " the eminently respectable and entirely unsuitable firm of Messrs. Banting."

They had arranged three great tiers of galleries, one above the other, over the west door, through which the Queen made her entry, which necessitated the low passage and the circus-like effect. *The Times* further tells how the galleries and the floor were covered with bath-red, which had the tint of cold blood and was incredibly mean and inartistic; the red was dotted all over with a ridiculous travesty of the Star of the Bath in white shaded with dirty grey. This carpet of cheap and nasty baize added to the circus effect, and drew from some reminiscent people a fancy picture of what the Abbey might have been treated with reverence and the floor covered with the rich rugs which were used at the coronation of George IV.

Mr. Somers Clark, in his article in *The Nineteenth Century and After*, tells some gruesome stories of the method of preparing the Abbey by Banting's men. For instance, the Coronation Chair, the pride of two nations, was smeared over with stain and varnish, and futile upholstery was nailed into the remnants of the gesso-work still adhering to the back and arms. The chair was then dragged over the wonderful Abbot Ware pavement in front of the altar, altogether irrespective of damage to the mosaic. A question being asked in the Commons about the treatment of the chair, Banting was ordered to remove the disfigurement, so the men set to work with spirit to wash off the discoloration. Somers Clark declares that he saw them, after dabbing on the spirit, rub it off with the tails of their rough cotton shirts. He must have meant the aprons, or whatever the men call their save-all garments; but even then the indignity was bad enough.

When it was all over the floor of the North Ambulatory had yielded considerably through the heavy beams; the porphyry and serpentine pavement of St. Edward's Chapel was badly damaged; and the surface was dragged from the old grey walls in long bands of white in many places.

"Happy inspiration! Dirt from the London streets was collected, soup made of it in buckets, and this was dabbed on the wounded places with mops. This I saw done," said Somers Clark.

One wonders by what arrangement a firm of undertakers were given this free hand to mar England's greatest building.

Of those who rode in the Queen's great procession that day the Crown Prince of Prussia won the most attention in his white uniform, and though he looked pale and grey, few knew that he was ill. Two queens were among the guests, the Queen of the Netherlands and the Queen of the Sandwich Islands. Of the latter Sir Lyon Playfair wrote—

"The only person who was of greater importance in England than in her own dominions was the Queen of the Sandwich Islands. She refused a guard of Hussars, and said that she would not leave her hotel unless Life Guards were sent to her as a crowned head, and she got her way. Another story went that the kings had struck and refused to offer their arms to her sable Majesty at the state balls, so the Dukes of Edinburgh and Connaught had to discharge this duty. It was surprising how this island queen maintained her royal dignity. I waited upon her Majesty one evening, and she received me and conversed through an interpreter in excellent style."<sup>1</sup>

There was, however, another very important person in the procession, and that was a coachman, who was asked if he would be driving any of the imperial or royal guests then staying at Buckingham Palace, and who replied, with proper pride—

"No, sir; I am the Queen's coachman. I don't drive riff-raff."

The great day drew to its close with an excited, shouting multitude thronging the streets; here was a

<sup>1</sup> *Lyon Playfair, Memoirs and Correspondence.* By Wemyss Reid.

chance of amusing themselves, and they took it without reasoning why or blessing the cause of it; but they were so heady that they might have been inverting themselves to let their blood run to their brains. Some remained cool, perhaps stayed at home, of whom one was Lord Derby, who remarked that though he had been very grateful to the Queen for much she had done, and especially for much she might have done and had not, he had not yet managed to work himself into a state of enthusiastic gratitude to her for having reigned fifty years.<sup>1</sup>

These were dreadful sentiments when every one was bubbling over with animal spirits and sentimentality, but the mark of a balanced mind none the less.

Aix-les-Bains, grateful for her Majesty's recent visit, in company with other continental places, blazed its enthusiasm into the night sky, priding itself upon its magnificent *pièce de resistance* which set forth its "Hommage à la Reine Victoria," and in its eagerness fixed it upside down.

Bismarck, too, had cast about for a way of celebrating, and his most pointed idea was to instruct one of his creatures to write an article upon the relative merits of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth, of course, as he said, "not to the advantage or the credit of the former." But his iron will went flabby for once, or rather deeper and more sinister intrigues occupied his mind, for the article was not written. It was a good thing, for the Queen would have been hurt, as of

<sup>1</sup> *That Reminds Me.* By Sir Edward Russell.

all historical English persons she most hated Elizabeth and most loved the Stuarts, especially Mary, Queen of Scots. Yet there were many points of resemblance between her character and that of Queen Elizabeth, and it was Dean Stanley who once said, "When she faces you down with her 'It must be!' I don't know whether it is Victoria or Elizabeth who is speaking."

For weeks the retreating wheels of the Jubilee rumbled in her Majesty's ears. She gave a great garden party at Buckingham Palace, at which, after the first appearance of the Queen, when the guests were marshalled into lanes for her to walk down, greeting those she knew, the well-bred guests literally mobbed her, opening out before her, closing when she had passed, and then rushing on in front to get another stare. (I saw the same thing done at the Quirinal a few years ago by people of all countries, but not by Italians.) The diplomatist Sir Frederick St. John, who was at the Buckingham Palace party, drew a favourable contrast to the aristocracy of Russia under the same circumstances; which should clear Russia on at least one point of the charge of barbarism.

In July the Queen paid a visit to her Prime Minister at Hatfield, and she attended a naval review in the Solent, at which, however, she lost her nerve, being very glad when it was over. All through her August visit to Osborne she received such masses of correspondence on the past event and had to give so much thought to it that it became a nightmare, for hidden

in her heart, under all the pleasure in the goodwill shown, lay a terrible sorrow.

For years she had grieved over the troubles which sometimes threatened to overwhelm her eldest daughter, the Crown Princess of Germany; troubles arising from the animosity and jealousy of Bismarck. Now there was a worse calamity, in that the Crown Prince was afflicted with a serious disease. After the Jubilee he underwent a slight operation in England, the effects of which allowed him to eat and speak without pain; and then the question had to be decided as to a long absence from Berlin and from the Court over which Prince Bismarck reigned supreme, with—as his aide-de-camp—Prince William, a Hohenzollern who concentrated in himself the most salient faults of his race.

## CHAPTER XXII

### THE CROWN PRINCESS

"My poor, dear, persecuted daughter!"—*Queen Victoria of the Empress Frederick.*

"Germany will pay dearly for the honour of having had Bismarck at her head, and for having possessed the most incapable Parliament that ever existed. The future will avenge Europe, for what now makes the glory of Prussia will be the cause of her ruin in time to come. It is not with impunity that all the vital strength of a nation is centred in one man . . . although he has triumphed over six successive Parliaments by the same artifices, although he has aggrandized his country and made himself the arbiter of Europe, imposing his will on all, Prince Bismarck has at the same time prepared the fall and annihilation of his country."—'Society in Berlin.' By Count Paul Vasili. 1885.

THERE has, perhaps, never lived a ruling sovereign about whom some marriage secret has not been related, and during the preparations for the Jubilee such a story was unearthed about Prince Albert,—who was in effect a ruling sovereign—was given publicity in the *New York World* and copied into some English newspapers. Such stories were told about George II, George III, George IV, William IV and nearly all the different members of the different royal generations; so if Albert did not suffer in exactly good company, there were at least people of equal rank who shared his misfortune.

The story was to the effect that in a little back street of New York a certain Mrs. Kent kept a shop, and that she was actually Queen Victoria's eldest daughter, and in this wise : In 1839, while wandering about the Continent, Albert of Coburg had fallen in love with and married a Countess von Reuss, member of a well-known German family, and then in the autumn of that year came the Queen's intimation to Albert that she thought their union would be a wise and happy event. The Countess von Reuss bore Albert a daughter on November 8, 1840, and on the 21st of the same month the Princess Royal was born. Upon this the deserted countess promised to efface herself on condition that the children should be changed, her child taking the position of Albert's eldest daughter, while Victoria's child was to be given over to the care of the Countess. After much persuasion the reluctant prince agreed, the exchange was secretly made, and the English princess grew up abroad. Her life was one of vicissitude. She married but got a divorce from her husband, went to America under the name of Mrs. Kent, came back and lived in Paris, whence she wrote to Victoria for money, John Brown being sent over there to see her and arrange matters. When last heard of, that is at the Jubilee, she was keeping this shop in New York.

It was so absurd a story that no one heeded it, especially as with the repetition of it apologetic explanations were published to the effect that early in the century the Duke of Kent had for a time settled down with some lady, who was generally known as

Mrs. Kent, and of whom this person of New York was a descendant.

Those of us who know the late portraits of the Empress and compare them with those of the Queen, could have no doubt that they were mother and daughter, though in her little volume, *Recollections of a Royal Parish*, Patricia Lindsay says, "She always seemed to me very unlike her brothers and sisters in appearance; the type of face was different, and though not handsome in feature was highly intelligent and in youth very winning . . . inheriting, in the Queen's opinion, much of her father's nature and talent."

This description, somewhat invidious in form, does not mean that the brothers and sisters were not clever, for though the Princess was extremely clever—in a different way from her father, for while he was academic she was creative—she yet was in some ways extremely stupid. In her tactlessness and indifference to public opinion and the feelings of those she disliked, she was very much like her mother, though, on the other hand, that which was obstinacy in the Queen developed as spirit with her, and she was entirely free from the weakness of self-commiseration which was so marked a feature of Victoria's middle life. Albert Edward was in many ways far more clever than his eldest sister, and though he did not distinguish himself with the paint-brush and the chisel, or in scientific and diplomatic arguments, his judgment upon all the essentials of his state and position was impeccable. The public is already beginning to see that Edward VII is by far the greatest person that his family,

either on the Guelphic or the Wettin side, has yet produced.

The *New York World* story does, however, bring to mind the rumours which spread about early in the married life of Albert and Victoria of a strange foreign lady seeking the former at Buckingham Palace, of a lady starting from the Continent to find him, and being intercepted and sent back before she could get here, and subsequently of a mad woman who tried to annoy him with her delusions.

Almost from the beginning the eldest princess's life had held the element of strife; she adored her father, and always ranged herself by his side in any difference between him and her mother; and even to the Queen she never failed from her youth up to say what she thought on any subject of dispute, such as the favour shown to John Brown, or to the Battenbergs.

Her life in Prussia was an unending struggle with Bismarck, for, as has been said, that statesman abhorred all royal women, fearing their influence, and he was not sparing of brutal criticism, for which he secured publication in the Press of many countries, attacking in turn the old Empress, Empress Augusta and the Crown Princess. This struggle culminated in 1887 and 1888 with the illness of the Crown Prince Frederick, and the proposed marriage of his daughter Victoria to Alexander of Battenberg, matters which absorbed Queen Victoria's thoughts.

It was obvious to all that the old Emperor William could not live long, and Bismarck looked forward with unconcealed repulsion to the reign of Frederick, with

whose enlightened views he had no sympathy; and when he knew that the heir was suffering from a disease in the throat, he hailed it as a means of deliverance from a dangerous situation. He knew that various Hohenzollerns had suffered from cancer, and suspecting that this dread disease had once more appeared, he at once studied the possibility of passing over the, to him, obnoxious generation. Prince William, susceptible to theories of force, was in his hands; for years the Chancellor had been training him in his system of warfare, aggression and greed of power and land. He had also been training him into opposition against his parents, and whole-hearted concord with himself. He regarded William as his puppet, and thought that if only Frederick could be eliminated his own further reign over Prussia would be assured.

Would William I outlive his son? He hoped so, but he dared not leave it to chance. So he discovered an old Hohenzollern law, said to apply only to insanity, and twisted it into one making a mortal malady a bar to the succession. He insisted upon the surgeons and physicians to the Prince being appointed by the State, that is to say by himself, and ruled that their verdict should be final. The chief of these was Professor von Bergmann, a skilful surgeon who loved using the knife, whether necessary or not.

By the spring of 1887 the disease had become serious, and the Princess had found out that a peculiarly odious form of espionage was being exercised in her home by people installed by Bismarck. There were spies, sycophants and scandal-mongers among

her servants, and lies and half-truths, to the injury of the Crown Prince, were disseminated until Berlin became a veritable whispering gallery.

Bismarck had more than one string to his bow; he caused a meeting with the Emperor of the Crown Prince and Prince William, at which the future situation was discussed. No one knows what happened, but the story went that Frederick decided to waive his right of succession in favour of his son. It was further added that Bismarck had secured a written promise to that effect, but he was never able to produce such a document. Yet so public had the matter become that the young prince was openly believed to be a party to a conspiracy to deprive his father of the Crown.

The doctors declared, and rightly, that the Crown Prince was afflicted with cancer, and von Bergmann said the only chance of saving him was that a dangerous and almost certainly fatal operation should be performed, that is to say that the affected portion of the larynx should be removed. This would at best have caused dumbness, and thus in either case the Prince would, according to the Chancellor's ruling, be unfit to reign.

It is needless to say that the Princess was entirely opposed to the operation, so von Bergmann decided that he must make a further examination, which would necessitate the use of anæsthetics. It was whispered in Court circles that he was really in the act of beginning the actual operation when the Crown Princess, suspecting his aim, tore the instruments out of his

hands and turned him out of the room. A picture of the event painted later by Oreste Cortazzo showed her kicking the door open for the discomfited doctor's exit, he holding his face as though it had been struck.

Through this dreadful time of trial the Crown Princess was in constant communication with her mother, and Dr. Morell Mackenzie was sent to Berlin, through Victoria's influence and with the acquiescence of the German doctors, who did not like the stories that were current. His verdict was that the throat was cancerous, but that in his opinion it might be cured by other means than the knife. Upon this a violent storm arose, the one side saying that the Crown Prince must die in six months if not operated upon, and the other that he would die at once if the operation took place.

So the Princess brought him to England—incidentally to make a lasting impression upon the public by his gallant bearing—and later took him to the Tyrol and San Remo. It was not until Emperor William died in March 1888, his last words being "dear Fritz," that the royal couple returned to the Charlottenberg, Berlin.

Of the awful nightmare of persecution which followed, every sort of mental annoyance being inflicted upon the new but dying Kaiser, there is no room here to write, but it is said that every one was in terror when William came to see his father lest he should suggest that he became Regent. And when Frederick died in June, after a reign of ninety-nine days, Prince William at once showed his true character. He was



H.R.H. THE PRINCESS ROYAL  
After a painting by Winterhalter



present at the last moments in the New Palace, Potsdam, to which his father had been moved, and as soon as the Emperor had drawn his last breath he ordered the guard to be doubled round the palace, and no one to be allowed to leave or enter. He then declared that all the property of those within, his mother, sisters and attendants, was confiscated for the time, and he personally "went through" their bedrooms, boudoirs, cupboards, desks, strong boxes, jewel boxes and every other receptacle for clothes, articles or papers. He told his mother's officials and servants that now he was master, and only his orders were to be obeyed. He tore up the list of persons who might be admitted to look for the last time on the dead emperor, which the Empress Frederick had given to her chamberlain, and substituted an order for the admission of high army officers. In fact, he heaped insults upon his dead father and his living mother. When the Empress Frederick left her home three months later for good, she is reported to have said good-bye to her officials and servants with these words, "If you ever want to see your old mistress again you must come to Berlin, where I will make you welcome. May palsy strike my foot if ever I thrust it over this threshold again!" She is said never again to have entered the palace in which most of her womanhood had been passed.

Thus did William help to build up a bitter enmity between himself and the royal family of England.

The reason for his search of his mother's home was that his father was said to have kept a detailed diary,

one volume of which proved conclusively that the whole German Emperor idea originated with and was planned by Frederick. As Bismarck had arrogated to himself all the credit for this, he was keenly anxious that the diary should never be given to the world, and had instilled into his pupil the necessity of confiscating all the volumes for fear of State secrets being revealed. None of them was found, however, and one story went that Queen Victoria had carried them, knowingly or otherwise, to England with her after she had visited her daughter at Potsdam in April 1888; another was to the effect that Sir Morell Mackenzie had brought them to England.

However, the particular 1870-71 volume had been put into the hands of Dr. Geffcken, a friend of Frederick's, who published it in a newspaper inimical to Bismarck, whereupon the latter brought all his Press influence into play by confiscating the offending paper, having abusive articles published about the dead Kaiser, saying that he was but a nonentity, who could never be trusted with knowledge of State affairs as he would reveal them to England, and that if the diary was genuine he was a traitor to Germany. Geffcken was seized and imprisoned, but when he was tried by the Imperial Court of Judicature at Leipsic on a charge of high treason he was pronounced innocent, which was the second blow received by Bismarck in the new reign. Through all this the young Kaiser William by his studied silence showed that he did not disapprove of this attack on his father.

There is a story that among the Queen's possessions

after her return from Germany the other volumes of the diary were found, and that a year later she sent them back to William, with their seals unbroken, an act which earned for her her grandson's gratitude, and made him revise his determination never to visit England.

After Kaiser Frederick's death William must have felt his relations with his mother's country to be seriously strained, and, according to his character, put the whole burden of fault upon England. The Prince of Wales was in Berlin in June and remained there for some time, deputed by the Queen to guard his sister's interests, and protect her from the insults of her son and Bismarck. It was to the latter's interest to keep the young Kaiser apart from his mother and her family, and to gain this end he once more resorted to the Press, causing articles "made in Germany" to be inserted in some of the English papers—he boasted of having captured three of the most important—in which William was painted in the blackest colours; while in Germany he had other articles given to the curious world, full of bitter denunciations of the Empress Frederick and the Prince of Wales, and to cap the affair further inserted in the German papers anonymous denunciations of the scandalous things said by the English Press. It is almost incredible, but it is all to be read in the books upon Bismarck, especially in those by his servant Busch, *Some Secret Pages of His History*, and others. A country which could produce a powerful man like Bismarck and a subservient tool like Busch, congratulating themselves

and each other with pride over their want of honour, was, in spite of its apparent strength, even then on the road to failure. It was Busch who noted on June 16—

“I wrote to Bucher a few lines expressing the satisfaction I felt that we were relieved of that incubus, the Emperor Frederick, and that his place was now to be taken by a disciple and admirer of the Chief.”

All these things taken into account, Albert Edward had no very easy time in Berlin, especially as no love was lost between him and his nephew. As boy and youth William had been arrogant and ill-mannered, and his uncle had duly snubbed him; as the years passed the English prince had seen far more deeply into the nature of the German emperor and into his plans than the latter liked. He knew the sinister hopes and ambitions of the young man’s mind, and, while not interfering with him, set himself to gain friends among the nations for Great Britain. It is to him that we owe the beginning of the great change in our relations with France, for he loved the French capital as much as he shrank from the pomposities of Berlin. But this preference and his friendliness with other European powers raised unmitigated spite and anger which, being cleverly worked by the German Press, has led to their present-day stories of how King Edward of England tried to set an iron wall around the Fatherland.

For several years after 1888 the Prince of Wales and the Kaiser scarcely spoke to each other, but Queen Victoria could not so show her displeasure, nor did she wish to do so. William was her eldest grandchild,

and had been much loved, and she was ready to accept what extenuation could be found for his conduct; he was not all she wished, but he would make Prussia strong, hold fast to the united Germany and be a great European power. So, angry as she was at his treatment of his mother, she yet felt grief that he assumed a personally hostile attitude to herself. It was not until the autumn of 1899 that, annoyed at the snubs which Russia dealt him and already contemplating the rupture with Bismarck, William paid his first visit to England as ruler of Germany. Victoria was delighted and showed him every mark of honour that was possible. William on his side was as eager for friendship, and so began a period of peaceful feeling between the two countries which was strengthened by the fall of Bismarck the next year.

It is necessary to go back in time, for there was another dispute in 1887 and the following year which had for its parties Queen Victoria and her daughter, the Crown Princess, on the one hand, and Bismarck and Prince William on the other. This was over Alexander of Battenberg, and the wonder was that the Crown Princess should have championed one of that family. However, her excuse was that her daughter Victoria was very much in love and had won her consent.

This daughter, Victoria, was said to be the least attractive and least popular of the Prussian royal children, but at her cousin's wedding at Darmstadt—the Hesse-Battenberg marriage—she had fallen in love with Alexander Battenberg, then Prince of Bulgaria,

who was regarded as the most handsome and fascinating man in Europe. His Bulgarian throne had collapsed in 1886, and he, without position or fortune, went to live in Darmstadt, his one ambition being to return to his position in the Prussian army. Then came the chance of marrying into the Prussian royal family, and though he must have been ready to seize it with delight, there must also have been some strong misgivings mixed with his emotion.

Queen Victoria accepted the idea eagerly, for, as has been said, she loved a romance, and she also had a strong partiality for the Battenbergs. Bismarck, to whom neither reasons appealed, was dead against such a match, and with some cause, but he was wrong in regarding the Queen's approval of it simply as a diplomatic attempt to spite Russia by making Prussia pick up the man whom Russia had cast down from the Bulgarian throne. However, that was the attitude he took, adding that Victoria was trying to injure Prussia by causing a rupture with the power which he had so long wooed.

The matter dragged through some contentious months, and in April 1888 the Chancellor thus delivered himself to Busch—

“The old Queen is fond of matchmaking—like all old women—and she may have selected Prince Alexander for her granddaughter because he is a brother to her son-in-law, the husband of her favourite daughter Beatrice. But obviously her main objects are political—a permanent estrangement between ourselves and Russia—and if she should come here for

the Princess's birthday there would be the greatest danger that she would get her way. In family matters she is not accustomed to contradiction, and would immediately bring the parson with her in her travelling bag and the bridegroom in her trunk, and the marriage would come off at once."

He declared, concerning the suffering Emperor Frederick, "They (the Empress and her daughter Victoria) actually ill-treated, abused and martyred him when he declined (to consent to the marriage). He is glad that I have come to his assistance, as she (the Empress) is too much for him in argument." Dr. Mackenzie, who also was at Charlottenburg at the time, remarked of it, "I cannot say that this discussion produced much effect on the Emperor."

Bismarck gave Busch instructions to write an article for the *Grenzboten*, with the title "Foreign Influence in the Empire," setting forth his views on the suggested marriage and attacking the Empress as tyrannizing over her husband, and a few days later expressed in the *Berlinger Boersen Zeitung* his abhorrence of the *Grenzboten* article.

The old Emperor William had been as much against the marriage as his Chancellor, but after his death Queen Victoria suggested that the wedding should take place at Windsor, and that the new Battenberg couple should live "elsewhere than in Germany." The trousseau was ready, the day fixed and almost arrived, when Alexander, who had probably realized that he would never again sup with Prussian officers, or indeed enter Prussia, and who had also most probably received

a strong hint from his prospective brother-in-law, decided that the world was *not* well lost for love, and wrote to the Crown Princess saying that he had come to the conclusion that he could only marry if he had the consent of Prince William. There may have been other influences at work to cause the writing of this letter, for Victoria, who had been in Florence in March, and gone thence in April to Charlottenburg, met Bismarck there. Busch tells in his diary what happened.

"*April 28.*—This afternoon met Bucher. He said, smiling, 'I have just heard a surprising piece of news. Grandmamma behaved quite sensibly at Charlottenburg. She declared the attitude of the Chief in the Battenberg marriage scheme to be quite correct, and urged her daughter to change her ways. Of course it was very nice of her not to forget her own country, and to wish to benefit it when it was possible for her to do so, but she needed the attachment of the Germans, and should endeavour to secure it; and finally she brought about a reconciliation between Prince William and his mother.'

"I asked, 'Have you that on good authority?'

"'On very good authority.'

"'Well, that is satisfactory . . . we do not hate Victoria on account of her extraction, but because she feels as an Englishwoman, and wishes to promote English interests at our expense, and because she despises us Germans.'"

When the Queen went to Charlottenburg this April, 1888, the Crown Princess showed some of that tact-

lessness which so much annoyed the Berliners, for, wanting to refurnish the rooms destined for her mother, she sent to England for all that she needed, and, further, had English workmen sent over to do the decoration. It was naturally deeply resented, and it was feared that some hostile demonstration might be made against Victoria. This did not happen, but Prince William behaved so coldly to his grandmother that she could plainly see the attitude of him and his friends.

Yet the Germans should not have been so much hurt, for they had little courtesy, as was shown once when the Crown Princess said of a dog, "Ah, he is a bad dog, he bit a child," and the prompt response was, "Nein Kaiserliche Hoheit, ein erwachsenes Mädchen!"

As for the principals in this marriage question, the young Princess Victoria married Prince Adolphus of Schaumberg-Lippe, and in 1889 Prince Alexander married when at Nice an actress, Mlle. Losinger, the daughter of the valet and the cook of the old Austrian General Faviani. Later the Prince abandoned both title and status in favour of the title of Count Hartenau, became a colonel in an Austrian regiment, and died as major-general in command of a brigade at Gratz in 1893.

Queen Victoria heard of his marriage with sorrow rather than with anger, merely saying with a sigh, "Perhaps they loved one another."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### IMPERIAL GROWTH

"Dere's grandma dinks she's nicht small beer,  
Mit Boers und such she interfere;  
She'll learn none owns dis hemisphere,  
But Me—und Gott.

She dinks, good frau, some ships she's got,  
Und soldiers mit der scarlet goat.  
Ach ! We could knock dem ! Poof ! Like dot,  
Myself—mit Gott."

*A. McGregor Rose. 1897.*

As some one has put it, under Lord Salisbury's political guardianship the Queen could sleep in peace; upon him had fallen the mantle of Beaconsfield so far as Victoria's favour went, though, honestly, Salisbury showed little veneration for his predecessor, whom he regarded as divided from himself by class and race. Salisbury had won his election on a "No Coercion" cry, thereby securing the adhesion of the Irish members. But he was an advocate of tradition, a champion of conservatism and aristocracy. He had fought each one of Gladstone's reforms with all his strength, whether in the suffrage, the Church or the Army. When Disraeli "dished the Whigs" by bringing in his Reform Bill of 1867, Salisbury resigned rather than be associated with it. He had none of Disraeli's plasticity, none of his sympathy for the workers which

made him once say, when talking of the narrow, selfish ways of many Whig and Tory landed proprietors who made their class hated by excluding the people from their parks and demesnes, "I for one cannot and will not do anything so absurd." But even one so steeped in the past as the new Prime Minister had to bend to the living forces of the time and accept Joseph Chamberlain as a colleague. This one-time ultra-Radical had rapidly assimilated the new Imperialism; he was a fighter, and power pleased his senses, and it was his imperialism which made him refuse to Ireland what he had been so anxious to give his own countrymen, a measure of justice and self-rule.

The Queen and her advisers, then, were in accord, and Disraeli's cry of a world-power seemed to be taking shape in fact. Indeed, after her Jubilee Victoria found herself much nearer that ideal than she had hoped ever to be when Beaconsfield died. Princes had come from all quarters of the globe to do her homage; her name was the link which bound the far ends of the earth together.

Yet there was one little country the people of which had refused to bow the knee to her greatness, and that was Ireland. Starved in every way, its manufactures destroyed, railways refused to it, its people left to the bitterest oppression of the exploiter, Ireland stood, sullen and defiant, while all the world knelt on that fine June day in 1887; for Ireland regarded its queen as its enemy.

Those who lived in comfort in England, who had no knowledge of all the conditions in Ireland—

conditions very different from those of Ulster—were aghast, and had no pity when the Government changed its tactics and declared for coercion of the most stringent type. Nearly three thousand families were cast roofless upon the roadside; and the terrible injustice of Mitchelstown, which occurred in September 1887, leaves a permanent blot upon the record of the then Irish Secretary. In this tragedy the slaughter of three Irishmen was finally left as though it had been the slaughter of three dogs, and it, with the evictions, gave birth to the second popular English movement in favour of Ireland which has, at long last, culminated in the present Home Rule Act. For the people know, what biassed rulers will not recognize, that unreproved violence by servants of the State means injustice; they themselves have suffered from it. Yet in England Chamberlain was allowed to gain for his countrymen the County Councils and the possession of allotments, while other isolated reforms took place which showed that the Conservatives were beginning to know the value of popular support.

The writer of the article in *The Quarterly Review* asserts that her Majesty “desired almost passionately to be loved by the Irish”; a statement which makes one dumb with surprise, for during a reign of sixty-four years she made no effort to understand the people or their conditions; for forty years—from 1859 to 1899—she refused to go near their shores; she was always ready to apply the rod and unwilling to give any kiss of peace.

If in the end she did desire the affection of those

people, it is one of the tragedies of her life that she did not earlier wake up to the possibilities of the sister isle, that the mellowing of her heart came too late. It is also a proof that the Queen Victoria of 1899 was a totally different person from the Queen of 1861. She had learned at last to trust and love her English subjects, and perhaps, had it only happened earlier, she would have found means to know and then to love her Irish subjects also. As it is, it cannot be a matter for surprise that Queen Victoria never gained the love of the Irish.

For the fourteen years that remained to her from the Jubilee the Queen set herself to secure the English. She did not change her long-cherished plans, but still paid three visits a year to Osborne, two to Balmoral, and a month abroad, which left her little time for Windsor and practically none for London. But London had grown used to this, and relied upon the Princess of Wales to organize "the season" and so keep society going.

On her journeys Victoria would go hither and thither, laying foundation-stones, reviewing troops, opening hospitals and town halls, christening or launching battleships, such as the *Royal Sovereign* and the *Royal Arthur*, visiting large towns in England and Scotland, such as Manchester, Sheffield, Derby, Paisley, Glasgow, etc. Bristol also she went to, when the spirit of love and forgiveness had become a habit with her, in 1899; for Bristol had been shunned by her since the early years of her reign, as it had refused to welcome a German prince as her husband. In 1899

she visited the principality of Wales, Sir Henry Robertson lending her Palé Hall, near Lake Bala, whence she went to see the Theodore Martins, who lived in the neighbourhood.

Sir Theodore Martin, like many of those who had had much personal intercourse with their Queen, has told much about her that it is pleasant to know; in his case it is enshrined in a little volume, *Queen Victoria as I Knew Her*. Once, when at Osborne on a wintry January day he had hurt his leg on the skating-pond, and had to keep his room for a considerable time. As soon as the Queen knew of the accident she telegraphed for Martin's wife (the one-time famous Shakespearean actress, Helena Faucit), and sent the royal yacht to fetch her. The next morning her Majesty went to see the injured man, and after leaving him it occurred to her that he did not look comfortable, so she sent a servant with two large pillows for his use. It was Theodore Martin who, on March 7, 1875, found the Queen in tears "and moved to a degree that was distressing to witness," for Sir Arthur Helps had died from a chill caught at the Prince of Wales's levee. Her first thought was for his family, and how the embarrassments from which they might suffer could be lightened.

While in Wales those few days she did her best to charm the people who saw her, even to the extent of learning sufficient Welsh to thank in their own language a party of men who presented her with a walking-stick of native wood.

Wherever she went she pursued an active policy

of giving as well as receiving pleasure, for, like little Kay in the *Snow Queen*, the piece of glass in her heart had at last melted and she was again human, and more like the girl-queen of 1837 than she had been since her marriage.

If only it had happened before those lost years were spent there would be no two opinions about Queen Victoria. As it was she had not time enough left her to catch up with neglected opportunities. English jealousy of her love for Scotland and Germany had been allowed too long a life to be permanently overcome by her old-age repentance or growth of kindness. Those who knew her and whom she liked, ladies who received her charmingly sympathetic letters of condolence, still adore her memory; a great proportion of the nation see her faults rather than her virtues, a large proportion have no interest in her at all, and a few repeat the old cry of her great goodness and wisdom. On the whole, judgment about the Queen must be regarded as suspended.

There was one more disagreeable matter up to which she felt that she had to screw her courage, and that was an endeavour to persuade the nation to allot maintenance to the third generation of her family. These incidents become wearisome by repetition, and I should like to pass this by, but it has to be related that this part of her life may be rounded off. Albert Victor was twenty-five that year, and Princess Louise of Wales was about to marry the Duke of Fife, who had for a couple of years been *persona grata* at Court. The dear lady had in England twenty-two grandchildren beside,

most of them threatened with loss of income on the death of their parents.

So once more the Queen girded on her armour, determined to get the whole matter settled at one stroke, and asked Salisbury to make an arrangement which should automatically pension each grandchild as occasion needed, and hinted that the same sum should be given to the second generation as to the first; that is, £15,000 each a year to the boys, and £6000, with a marriage portion of £30,000, to the girls.

Salisbury could not—indeed, dared not—suggest such a course, and the discussion was started in Parliament by the reading of the two messages from the Queen concerning Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence, and the Princess Louise.

At once all the old arguments arose, less noisy, but stronger and deeper, than before; for Bradlaugh was at hand, with his long-advocated republicanism, his denunciation of the extravagance and wastefulness of keeping a Court. Labouchere, too, had weight, and John Morley lent dignity to the expostulations. Bradlaugh wanted to refer the whole question of royal revenues to a committee for reconsideration, arguing that the royal savings on the Civil List would amply provide for all the grandchildren. This amendment was lost, but 125 members voted for it. Gradually the demand was lessened, the Queen withdrawing those for her daughters' children, and then those for the children of her younger sons; but at last it was only through the mediation of Gladstone, who was

anxious to save the Monarchy from any further criticism and dispute, that the ministers modified the proposal to granting a sum of £36,000 annually to the Prince of Wales for the support of his children. Even this met with opposition from the Radicals, Labouchere demanding a peremptory refusal to the making of any grant to the grandchildren at all, and his amendment to this effect gained 116 supporters. A further amendment by John Morley ensuring finality by declaring that no further demands could be made was lost by 355 to 134. Lord Selborne saw in all this ominous signs of a recrudescence of republicanism. It would have been more correct to have judged that republicanism had quietly grown stronger through the years owing to the constant demands made by the sovereign, accompanied by her neglect of her people.

Now that the order of things has changed, and there is less royal interference with the Government, few people trouble about republicanism, though its theoretical supporters may have greatly increased; but the popular sentiment of independence is stronger than ever, and if any ruler of Britain suddenly assumed arbitrary power the Conservatives themselves would be among those resenting it; they, too, would show themselves republican.

The grants made in 1889 were subject to this restriction, that they should continue only until six months after her Majesty's death, for naturally then different arrangements would have to be made. With this conclusion the Queen, though only half pleased,

declared herself satisfied, and it is amusing to note that while the negotiations were pending, and Gladstone, as usual, was doing his best for his sovereign, she sent friendly congratulations to him on his golden wedding day; the Prince and Princess of Wales did the same, accompanying them with a present.

As a last word on money matters and the Queen's ability to see after her grandchildren it may be as well to state what her income was at the time.

The Duchy of Lancaster, which had been a negligible factor when her first Civil List was arranged, producing only £5000 a year, now brought in £60,000, a small part of which went in administration of the estates. There was also £60,000 from the Civil List, and all the income from investments and shares, house and landed property which she had secured through savings on the Civil List. During these last debates it was officially stated that the total savings on the Civil List only amounted to £824,025, and that out of this much had been spent on entertaining foreign visitors; in fact, the actual amount which had been put to the Queen's credit was £653,000, a sum which, laid out at interest, could scarcely be regarded as despicable. In addition to this there were the legacy of a quarter of a million left her by John Camden Neild, other smaller legacies from subjects, and the sum the Queen inherited under the will of the Prince Consort, which popular report said was nearly a million pounds, though this must have been a great exaggeration. Truly Labouchere had some justification for inviting the special committee to record its

opinion that it was undesirable to prejudice any final decisions by granting allowances or annuities to any of the grandchildren of the sovereign.

Sir H. W. Lucy, in *Later Peeps at Parliament*, states that he was told by one in authority that the Queen's personality did not exceed at her death the sum of 800,000; and this might well be if she had already made the promised provision for her descendants, and she had certainly done much for her children.

During the last years of her Court, when comparative social gaiety was observed, the royal household expenses were increased; and it is said that she had become so mellowed that she made up deficiencies in some departments from her privy purse. It was a pity that occasional evidences of generosity were not given to the public by Victoria, for there was a strong popular belief that she had become miserly, which was strengthened by the fact that neither during the Jubilee of 1887 nor that of 1897 did she show any gratitude for a long life of unbounded opportunity by dispensing money of her own in any good cause. Her small habits of strict economy lasted to the end of her life, and little payments for work done which had been considered adequate in 1861 were so considered in 1901.

As an instance of this, a covering cloth was used for the donkey which drew the Queen's chair, to be thrown over him when standing still, which cloth was bound all round with black braid. When the braid was worn a poor woman of Windsor was employed

to renew it and to re-work the royal monogram in the corner, for which she never received more than one and sixpence. Of course, a thing like this might never come to the personal knowledge of the Queen, yet she was so precise about details, so observant of everything around her, that those about Windsor who knew of royal habits would not believe but that such things were governed by her Majesty's wishes.

During the parliamentary debate the tremendous expenditure incurred by the royal yachts was again urged, and H. W. Lucy gives in his book interesting information concerning three of them. The little *Elfin*, built at a charge of only £6000 early in the reign, cost yearly such a sum that in 1900 it was estimated that £500 a ton had been spent over it; a man-of-war would in the same period have cost £80 a ton. The *Victoria and Albert*, built in 1855, cost originally £176,820, but, apart from wages of the crew and supply of stores, the nation had subsequently paid £12,000 a year for it, which brought the total expense to nearly three-quarters of a million. The *Alberta* was built in 1863, being quickly followed by the *Osborne*, the initial charge for the latter being £134,000, and the annual expenditure for her being £8000. In addition to this there was the *Fairy*. Yet, possessing all these, it was announced in the papers late in 1895 that a new yacht was to be built for the Queen's use, assurance being given that no attempt would be made to rival the floating palace of the Kaiser. As Victoria had by that time lost her nerve on the water, this may not have been true, though,

on the other hand, it may have shown a desire for something especially steady and safe.

The troublesome matter of the royal incomes being at last swept from her life, the Queen turned to more stately things. In August 1889 she received for the second time as a guest the Shah of Persia, and later came her nephew, William II of Prussia, on a visit.

There were wheels within wheels to bring about the imperial meeting. Before he had been Kaiser a month William had rushed off—without invitation—to Russia, desiring to prove not only his severance from England, but that *he* could bring about the longed-for Russian entente. He was not received too warmly, and afterwards he waited in vain for a return visit from the Tsar. Meanwhile, during the next twelve months, he was trying to prove, first to himself and then to the world, who was really master of Prussia—he or Bismarck. Knowing the jealousy between Russia and England and the hatred of Bismarck for all that was British, he then determined to flout both the Tsar and his Chancellor by discovering an elaborate warmth of friendship for his grandmother and her country. So he steamed away from Germany, much to Bismarck's anger, in his beautiful yacht, the *Hohenzollern*, at the head of a dozen new warships, to Portsmouth Harbour.

He was received with open arms, and promptly created an admiral of the English Fleet, whereupon he solemnly made his grandmother a colonel of dragoons, re-naming the regiment "The Queen of England's Own." He also held out the olive branch

to his uncle the Prince of Wales by gazetting him a colonel in the Prussian Army. It was a merry farce of compliments on the one side, for the Queen never rode at the head of her dragoons, nor did the Prince of Wales ever lead his Prussian regiment. The Emperor regarded his new honour somewhat differently, for when he went to Athens in the following October to be present at the marriage of his sister with Prince Constantine of Greece he steamed into the Ægean Sea with the British admiral's flag flying at his yacht's masthead, and prosecuted what he fancied to be the duties of a British admiral with greater zeal than discretion. For a British squadron was in the bay, and he would descend upon it at all unearthly hours, order the men up for parade, inspect uniforms, stores and the condition of the ships in a way which raised the anger of the officers and men alike, so that at last a complaint was sent to the Admiralty by the former. As some one said, "If he would just wear the uniform and let it end there we should not mind; but we did not make him an admiral that our lives might be worried out of us in this fashion."

William was by this and subsequent visits fired with fresh enthusiasm for his own fleet, and cogitated methods of securing advantage for it. Thus when Anglo-French-German disputes arose over territory in Africa, he was ready in 1890 to forgo his purely nominal authority in Zanzibar for definite possession of Heligoland. His grandmother could deny him nothing, and though Lord Salisbury has generally been blamed for losing this rocky yet valuable little

island, the act was the Queen's, who did not suspect the astuteness of the policy which not only gained for Germany a much stronger naval base, but ousted the British from a spot too near to Kiel. And the Germans say now that this European war of 1914 and 1915 could never have taken place but for the possession of Heligoland !

It is forgivable to feel some satisfaction in knowing that that hard man Bismarck, who had cast off so many, friend and foe alike, when he could squeeze nothing more out of them, went begging at the last to the woman whose life he had done his best to mar, the Empress Frederick, not knowing that she had helped in his undoing. Finding that her son was rebelling against the autocracy of his Chancellor, she had drawn him once more under the influence of his old tutor Hinzpeter, whose whole nature was opposed to the ruthlessness of Bismarck ; and so she had helped to make the breach final. Bismarck, catching at every straw, went so far as to inspire an article in one of our great "dailies" upon the admiration he felt for the Empress ; and he went to ask her intercession, reminding her of a service he had done her—though he did not recall that it was at her husband's orders—two years earlier. She, whom he had persecuted for more than thirty years, whose home he had filled with his spies, whose son he had alienated, whose adopted country he had turned in hatred against her, could do nothing to soften the blow to him.

In this crisis Bismarck knew no reticence. He showed only too plainly his mortification, and loudly

demanded that every one should know that he went from his post against his will. Visitors who called to take leave of him were entertained by Princess Bismarck's denunciations of the Kaiser—

“The brat, the stupid brat!” she cried over and over again.

*Punch* published its noted cartoon of “Dropping the Pilot,” which highly delighted William, and Bismarck said bitterly that the Kaiser saw in it a justification of his action.

Though the Kaiser revisited England every year until 1896 he was already meditating how and when he could use his new fleet, and keeping a sharp eye on Africa, ready to pounce upon any chance of a colony. As an American, Pulteney Bigelow, said in 1891, “Germany waits from day to day to mobilize her troops and march to the frontier.” From that time for five years William was intriguing in South Africa, and Europe looked on with some amusement, for Britain had been so successful in land-grabbing that a little trouble for her was regarded as legitimate. Great Britain claimed suzerainty over the Transvaal, but the Kaiser practically recognized its independence, in spite of the Pretoria Convention of 1881 and the London Convention of 1884. In the troubles which followed Germany was regarded as the warm friend of the Boers, and a banquet was given among the leading Boers in honour of the Kaiser’s birthday in January 1895, at which Kruger referred in glowing words to William, saying that the friendship of Germany for his nation would in the future be more firmly

established than ever. There is no doubt that, England being the one whom Kruger hated, he expected the help of William in getting rid of its control. The knowledge of this reached England, of course, and Chamberlain felt it necessary to announce that the conventions would be adhered to, and in May Tongoland and Kosi Bay were annexed, which shut the Boers from the sea. This may seem arbitrary, but though the Boers had long had the chance of securing Kosi Bay they had refused to comply with the necessary conditions. The result of this was that England and Portugal joined up on the east coast of Africa at a point which the Germans were beginning to consider specially necessary to themselves, and the annexation was made specially to prevent Germany from having a spot at which she could land troops in aid of the Boers, and where she could secure the rights over the Delagoa railway.

William made overtures to Russia to aid him in his championship of the Boers, and Russia turned her back on him; France refused to become ally to her enemy, so he approached Portugal, haughtily demanding that his troops should land in Delagoa Bay on their way to Pretoria. And he did all this, imagining that at his word Britain would waive her suzerainty over the Transvaal, although more than half the inhabitants were European, possessing nine-tenths of the country's wealth and half the land.

The cause of dispute between the Boers and the Uitlanders, or Europeans, was comprehensible enough. The Boers cared nothing for gold, diamonds or mines;

they wanted to farm their land and to be left in peace and in patriarchal family squalor. Europeans insisted upon digging mines, making railways, and otherwise upsetting the land-dwellers; so the latter put every possible difficulty in the way of the former. To the English land-grabber in distant lands rights of property do not exist, except for himself, and it cannot be expected that he should be treated gently. The Boers did what they could to protect themselves: they allowed the strangers no political rights, seeing a definite swamping for themselves if they did so; they secured monopolies of all important things necessary for the miners, such as fuel, petrol, etc., and made their enemies pay through the nose; they taxed the Uitlanders to extinction, allowed them no schools for their children, and bound them so tightly hand and foot as to make their lives unbearable. I am stating facts, not upholding ethics for one side or the other. This struggle, pushed to extremes, could only end in war, and Cecil Rhodes, then Prime Minister of Cape Colony, made the first move towards the reopening of the conflict which had been closed by Gladstone in 1883. He, with Dr. Jameson and Alfred Beit, laid a plan of invasion, by which the two latter were to cross the border and join up with Uitlanders in Johannesburg. Delay was, however, necessary, as arms and men were not ready, but Jameson had the adventure in his blood and started against orders. He and his men fell into the Boers' hands, and the Jameson Raid was a foregone failure.

Upon this the Queen's grandson William sent an

open telegram to Kruger congratulating him that "without appealing to the help of friendly Powers" he had repelled the invasion. Of course, every one knew that he meant himself by "friendly Powers," and England was wild with anger against him over this folly, so the Queen wrote her beloved young relative a stiff letter, such as she could write when moved, pointing out that his interference in South Africa would most assuredly mean war. As William was not then ready for war he climbed down, ordered his newspapers to explain the incident away and express surprise that the English Press should have made so much over so little. When Kruger went to Berlin later, and for the second time, William refused to see him.

From that point there was some bitterness between Victoria and the Kaiser, though both of them diplomatically tried to hide that fact. When returning from Nice that spring Victoria came through Germany, that she might meet her grandson and assure him that her neglect to return his visits was not due to indifference, as he had suggested; but she did not go to Berlin. William, on his part, sent her a present in the summer, perhaps with a sly hint of menace behind it; for it took the form of a fountain fashioned as an eagle flapping its wings, the water issuing through its beak so that it looked as though flying through spray. It was set up in a little garden near another fountain presented by Emperor William I, and one feels that the Prussian eagle seemingly flying through Windsor gardens was somewhat ominous.

Kaiser William did not come to England again until 1899, and it has been said that he never came without squeezing something out of his grandmother. That year he obtained an island in the Samoan group—probably with a view to making raids on Australia and New Zealand. The cartoonists got to work over this, and *Figaro* gave a picture of the Queen cutting for him a large slice off a plum pudding named the World, William, dressed as a sailor, running eagerly for it. Another drawing showed him wiping her eyes with a handkerchief labelled Delagoa Bay, while out of his pocket protruded a treaty with the word Samoa upon it.

Cecil Rhodes came to London in 1896 to face the music caused by the Jameson raid, and a great speech was expected; but four days later he left, having said no word in public. During that short period he was summoned to Windsor. It was the second time that he had had an audience of the Queen. The first time was in 1891, when he dined and slept at Windsor and had a long talk with her Majesty over South African affairs, during which she showed an astonishingly intimate knowledge of the country. After he had gone some one remarked to the Queen that he was a great woman-hater, upon which she replied, with her delightful simplicity—I hope she felt a touch of humour in making such a reply—“Oh, he was very kind to me!”

To the second interview Rhodes went in “a state of awful funk,” says Mr. Harry Furniss in his book, *Harry Furniss at Home*; but he received only a mild

remonstrance, much to his surprise, for he had expected a severe scolding, and he looked uncommonly relieved. The Queen in her heart was glad that the South African matter was being reopened, and that at last there was a chance of reversing the earlier policy.

There is a story of another South African millionaire, evidently a German, being received by Victoria, to whom she said—

“Sind sie ein Baier?”

He, being confused and perhaps not expecting to be addressed in German, replied, “Not at present prices, ma’am.”

In 1898 there occurred a new cause of trouble between the English Court and the Kaiser, one which is not likely to appear in the history books. When Duke Ernst of Saxe-Coburg died in 1893 the Queen’s second son, Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, took possession of the little German principality and went to live there, giving up the allowance of £15,000 made by our Parliament, but retaining the extra £10,000 allotted to him on his marriage. He had one son, Alfred, who would have succeeded him had he not fallen into the Kaiser’s power.

From the day he ascended his throne the Kaiser assumed despotic authority over all his relations, interfering in their domestic affairs and ordering their goings out and their comings in. One instance of this is fairly well known. Princess Frederick Leopold, sister to the present Kaiserin, went skating with only one lady in attendance, and, getting on to thin ice,

fell in, being promptly rescued. William, on hearing of it, immediately ordered the punishment of Prince Frederick for allowing his wife so much liberty. Neither Prince nor Princess was allowed to leave their house for a certain number of days, and all lights were to be put out in their rooms at eight o'clock every evening, as though they were two naughty children.

When he found that a young cousin of his own was to live in Coburg, William demanded that the education of the boy should be given over to him, and had him brought to Berlin away from his family. Once having Alfred there, he placed him in a military circle and forgot him. No motherly or fatherly control was exercised by the Imperial couple, and being left entirely to his own devices he got into bad company, was fleeced by gamblers, slipped heavily into debt, and lost both his reputation and his health. Learning something of all this, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg went to Berlin and plucked his son away into what he hoped was safety. It was too late, however; the young man died shortly after, in February 1899, at Meran, of phthisis. So says the biographer, but the report at the time was that he had shot himself.

An heir being needed for the Saxe-Coburg throne, the Duke of Connaught was named. At first he accepted the prospect, but on second thoughts, and considering his own young son in connection with his Prussian nephew's peculiarities, he decided that the risk was too great; and so he, with the Queen's strong approval, refused the chance of reigning over

his father's country. Connaught had been Victoria's favourite son since the death of the Duke of Albany, and she wished to lose him as little as she wished another grandson to share the fate of Alfred. Eventually the boy Duke of Albany was appointed heir, there being then every reason to hope that it would be many years before he would take his place in Germany. To-day he is fighting against those who nurtured and brought him up.

There was another prince who, for the same reason, held aloof from Berlin, and that was the Duke of Cumberland, who, but for Bismarck, would have been King of Hanover. Because he had no wish to see his son delivered over to the mercies of the Kaisér he resolutely refused all Prussian invitations to forgive the injury of 1866.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### NEARLY AN AUTOCRAT

"Through it all stood out his old conservatism in the truest sense of the word : his devotion to old traditions and constitutional forms ; his loyalty to the Crown ; while with this devotion was joined a courtesy most reverential to the Queen and an affection for the royal family which was most touching."—*'Recollections, 1832 to 1886.'* By the Right Hon. Sir Algernon West, K.C.B.

"I observe that it is now universally the fashion to speak of the first personage in the state as the great obstacle of the measure."—*'Peter Plymley's Letters.'* By Sydney Smith.

FOR six years the Queen was happy politically, and then a new Government was elected with a Liberal and Irish majority of forty only. It was most disconcerting to Victoria, who, hoping against hope that something might happen to save the situation, commanded Lord Salisbury not to resign until Parliament met. So he submitted himself to the inevitable passing in the House of a vote of want of confidence, and the next morning must have read in the Court Circular with some surprise, as did the rest of the world, that the Queen accepted his resignation "with great regret." In one sense she never could remember that she was Queen not only of the Conservatives but of all English people, or if she remembered it she was indifferent to the anger which such acts as these raised among

half her subjects. This Parliament lasted only three and a half years, until June 1895, and it accomplished little, though never had more strenuous labour or more careful thought been given to the affairs of the country. The man in the street knew that the Queen would welcome anything which would render that labour and thought ineffective, and expressed himself in elation or bitter disgust according to the side he took; the members of the Commons knew exactly what her feelings were, and opposition became simply obstruction, any trick of noise or subtlety being resorted to face down the Ministry or discredit the ministers.

The Lords were almost at the pinnacle of their pride, and felt that the real power of government lay in their hands. The Home Rule Bill passed its third reading in the Commons by a small majority of thirty-four, which gave them their coveted opportunity. We still call it a fight over Home Rule, but in reality Home Rule mattered little except as a symbol. It was an elemental fight between Imperial-Jingoism and reason, between pride of dominance and love of force on the one hand and progressive tendency on the other. Queen Victoria had, in fact, lost her balance over Gladstone, seeing in him a wolf waiting to gobble up her kingdom, and so she deliberately set herself at the head of a party—her party. She had never been reticent about those whom she liked or disliked, and she plainly told every one whom she spoke with or wrote to, what she thought of the bill and its projector. She led the Church, the Army, the Conservatives, all whose ideals were of dominance and power;

and the Lords, dear people, realized with exhilaration that for once they had a free hand, that no diplomacy of compromise or mediation would be resorted to this time by their sovereign. They seized the occasion with joy, and when this Home Rule Bill, this figment of things of much greater moment, passed into their hands, they incontinently slew it, and, to quote from a nonsense rhyme, "cast its reeking fragments on the air."

What revellings there were, and what language! I remember being told over the breakfast-table—not my own—by an avowed upholder of Church and State, that if he could only sit there and watch Gladstone's body hanging from the tree before his window he would be happy, and would thoroughly enjoy his breakfast. His eye gleamed with desire as he spoke. He was a type of the extremist party in the struggle. One proof that this struggle had nothing in reality to do with Home Rule was that this excess of feeling was evoked not only by the mention of Ireland, but by the mere name of Gladstone, and in connection with every act of his Government. Thus an Employer's Liability Bill in cases of accident, and a parish council measure, both of them of great importance, were as bitterly withheld as the Irish Bill, and thrown out by the Lords in the same way. These unreasoning acts were the beginning of the downfall of the Lords.

Gladstone had overcome the opposition in the Commons with his marvellous gifts of rhetoric and reason, but he could do nothing with the Lords, and the Queen saw with joy that she was now strong enough

to do what she liked, that at long last she, and not her Parliament, was the real ruler of England.

Henceforth the people allowed this position, though they did not recognize it openly, and for this there were several causes. At the beginning of Queen Victoria's reign her sex had acted powerfully in awakening a chivalry which allowed to a woman that which would be resented in a man. She was weak, therefore she must be defended. This general feeling flagged under Albert, and flagged still more strongly in those years of her widowhood when she showed herself independent of anything her subjects might say, do, or ask. But the knowledge, forced into the people's minds at the Jubilee, that now she was old, revived the ancient indulgent spirit. We all give way to age, to those who have not long to live; we want them to be happy, and ourselves to escape the remorse which would later arrive if we thwarted their wishes.

A second strong reason was the glamour of Imperialism or Jingoism which affected the greater part of the nation, including many Liberals and Democrats. Those who disagreed with it saw its weakness, and believed it to be but a spurious form of patriotism which bore within it the seeds of its own destruction. They knew that though the Government of the country was in the hands of Liberals, half the nation had become drunk with this belief in their own share of imperial greatness, and that nothing was to be done until the fit had worn itself out. How much the annual visit of the German Emperor pandered to this sentiment cannot be judged, but it certainly had a large

influence upon the Queen, and some upon her people. The very children in the schools were unfailingly taught that they were members of the most glorious nation upon earth, one upon which the sun never set. This self-glorification rose until it became almost a frenzy in 1897, the year of the Diamond Jubilee. Yet no one feared over-much for the English Constitution, for all knew that the ebullience could not last long, it might end this year or next, soon any way, for its strength would evaporate directly Victoria left this world for another.

By July 1892 Gladstone had lost the sight of one eye, and the other was affected; his hearing, also, was bad, and he knew that he could not retain office long. But he did not resign on Home Rule, the two causes which led to that event in March 1894 being his health and the opposition he felt to the heavy Naval Estimates in the new Budget. Those who insisted upon them probably already had cause to suspect the designs of Germany, but Gladstone felt them to be a menace of war. "I have always advocated and worked for peace. I cannot change that attitude," he said.

He wrote to the Prince of Wales to tell him of his intended resignation, and the Prince responded with a charming letter of appreciation and kindness, including Mrs. Gladstone's name. Arthur Balfour, his opponent in the House, spoke of the nation's debt of gratitude to him in fostering and keeping alive the great traditions of the House of Commons. But Queen Victoria had no kindly farewell greeting for her aged minister, no word of thanks for his long and

warm loyalty to her personally and to the Throne, nor did she show any recognition that by his social measures he had saved England from a possible revolution in 1867, and gradually leavened the workers with some of his own loyalty. She was determined not to ask him herself for any advice or information as to his successor, for she had already chosen the man, yet she badly wanted to know what he thought would be the attitude of the members towards her choice. So she tried to elude this difficulty by instructing General Ponsonby to waylay Gladstone before her interview with him and find out what he thought. There was to be a Privy Council in the morning, so as soon as Gladstone arrived for that Ponsonby met him and plied him with questions. When Gladstone saw to what these questions were tending, he said that all his thoughts were at the command of the Queen, but it must be at her command, otherwise his lips were sealed. As Sir Henry had not been ordered to divulge that command, the information was not given.

When in the afternoon queen and minister met, most of the talk was of eyes and ears, German *versus* English oculists, Victoria being emphatic as to the superiority of the German over the English, as was her usual opinion over the attainments of the two nations. So they parted, the Queen so cold and indifferent that those about her were as much distressed as those who cared for the old man. So aloof was she that, after sixty-three years service, Gladstone could not even offer his loyalty and best wishes.

"A departing servant has some title to offer his

hopes and prayers for the future; but a servant is one who has done, or tried to do, service in the past," he said sadly, afterwards.

When he left her he found the Empress Frederick outside waiting to say good-bye to him, with a friendly clasp of the hand, giving him "a most kind and warm farewell." The next day he received from the Queen a note in answer to the written resignation he had left in her hands, and in it she hoped that he would have rest and quiet, adding that she would have offered him a peerage, but that she knew he would not accept it, which was rather a neat way of now withholding it. Twice she had offered him this dignity, hoping by that means to secure his removal from the lower House, and twice he had refused it because his work was not done. Now that his reason for refusal no longer existed, the Queen was adroit enough to use it as though still in force. Not that there is any evidence that he would even then have welcomed it.

Gladstone praised her sincerity, but her attitude wanted greatness and dignity.

I remember hearing many stories at the time intended to show how little honour she ever paid Gladstone, stories of her keeping him waiting alone for hours when he went to consult her, and showing slights in other ways, for Liberals were greatly incensed with her over what they regarded as her Georgian manners; and she quite sufficiently resembled her forbears to show her feelings in this way. It is open to wonder if she hated her statesman as much as the lady who was dying and whose doctor thought the only chance

of her recovery was to administer a mental shock. So, knowing her opinions, he shouted into her ear the one word, "Gladstone!" "Wretch!" she cried and recovered.

Victoria chose as Prime Minister one from whom she thought she would have nothing to fear in regard to the doings in either House or measures of Reform—Lord Rosebery, whose mother had been one of the Queen's bridesmaids and whose grandmother had been a member of the first Household of the reign. Yet under him the Welsh Disestablishment Bill passed its second reading, and the Duke of Cambridge was induced to resign at last his office as commander-in-chief. Neither event pleased the Queen, who, however, hoped that she would be able to keep the army post still in her family.

Her military enthusiasm increased rather than diminished as she became old, and nearly all her public appearances were connected in some way with army matters, reviews, military exhibitions and visits to Aldershot. In January 1893, when Sir Evelyn Wood was giving up the command at Aldershot, it was reported that her Majesty was personally anxious that he should be succeeded by her third son, the Duke of Connaught. With this rumour was for months fitfully busy, until early in August the Duke of Connaught caused a contradiction to be published, in deference to the strictures made upon "one of the crying evils of our present system, which pitchforks royalty on to posts which it never would occupy otherwise," etc., to quote newspaper comments. A few days later his

contradiction was contradicted from headquarters, and he took the command. From that time the Queen was frequently at Aldershot, even staying there for two days on one occasion. When the Duke of Cambridge resigned she confidently expected that her son would be made commander-in-chief, but in this matter her hopes were not realized. One wonders whether they would have been under Lord Salisbury. In 1888, under his Ministry, an endeavour had been made to invest the post with far wider and more responsible powers, most probably to meet the Queen's desire that her personal deputy should be given the entire control of the army, a most dangerous thing for the country, when the deputy was chosen by favour and because he was a royal relative, and without any regard for his military career or ability. The whole responsibility for army matters and military duties of every kind was then centred in the commander-in-chief.

This act, intended as a final declaration of the Queen's supreme control of the army, led to the sweeping away of the whole fiction. Its nineteenth-century resuscitation in England had been caused by the German training of Prince Albert, or rather by the behind-the-throne exhortations of Stockmar, though among us it had been dead for centuries, and it was a definite and threatening step towards despotic power, being an integral part of the "divine right" belief.

The Duke of Cambridge was no longer young, and could not possibly carry out the duties which this change demanded of him. It meant excessive centralization in his hands, and the weakening of respon-

sibility and efficiency among the heads of departments. If it had been persisted in it must have practically destroyed the army, for the time had even then long passed when one brain could keep a country's army fit for all emergencies. So reorganization took place, and the Government decided to put an able soldier at the nominal head of military affairs, choosing Lord Wolseley, and strictly limiting the term of office to five years. So passed from England—it is to be hoped for ever—this trace of German militarism.

To compensate her cousin for his loss of public position the Queen made him her first personal aide-de-camp, with the right of attending her on all military occasions and of holding the parade on her birthday. As commander-in-chief he had done his best according to his knowledge and training, and at his age, the same as that of Victoria, he must have been ready to give way to a younger man with more modern views. He retained many other posts, among them being Ranger of Hyde Park (since 1852), also of St. James's Park, and of Richmond Park; indeed, one of his nicknames with the public was "George Ranger."

The appointment of Lord Rosebery as Prime Minister had not been popular, even in his own party, for many resented the placing of a peer in the supreme position in the Commons, and his Ministry was defeated in June 1895, Lord Salisbury again coming into office, with Joseph Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary. From that time to her death the Queen was happy politically.

She even more closely associated herself now with

military matters than before; she talked army, and praised army life in a way that was truly Germanic; so much so that Henry of Battenberg became inculcated with military fervour. Princess Beatrice had had several children, the second being born in 1887, Victoria being reported to have strongly desired that its name should be Jubilee. The home of the Battenbergs was still at Windsor, or Osborne, or Balmoral, though there were suggestions that a separate establishment should be formed; and this palace life was but a dull one for a young man, though it was now more diverse and gay than it had ever been in Princess Beatrice's youth. It held, however, no excitement and little change, except that of scene. The people had never taken to Prince Henry, moved more by national prejudice than any other sentiment, for he interfered in no way with public things. His chief troubles seemed to be social, for however happy he might be in his relations with the Princess and Queen, there were members of that large family who were equal to giving Bismarck much justification for his lecture on snobbery. Early in the 'nineties stories were told of the way in which Prince Henry was publicly snubbed by them, stories which might or might not have been true; the following is gathered from Mr. Thomas Catling's book of *Reminiscences*, and may be regarded as true, as it was related to him by an official who was present on the occasion.

At a November 9th dinner-party given by the Lord Mayor at the Mansion House various guests were invited, among them being Prince Henry. The seats

were arranged strictly in order of precedence, and, as usual, a plan of the table was made. Some of the guests at the top table, thinking themselves rather crowded, pushed out one chair and took their seats. Prince Henry, who arrived after this had been done, referred to the plan, and asked his relatives—by marriage—to move that he might take his place. They all sat stolid, no one would move, and the unfortunate guest had to find an official and get his help. Official authority had actually to be used to make the offenders sit more closely so that the chair could be replaced. Turning round before he sat down, Henry said—

“Thank you; they are very cruel to me.”

He must have found it a pleasant dinner to sit through!

At one such dinner the Duke of Cambridge, who was accustomed to use loud and plain speech, caused some consternation by looking down at the seat reserved for him and blurting out—

“I’m damned if I’m going to sit there.” And it took much suavity and explanation to induce him at last to take the chair assigned him.

Henry, somewhat weary of his aimless existence, and more than weary of the way in which he had to regard his position, at last determined to make a bid for personal honour. We were then engaged in the second Ashanti war, which incidentally brought another large slice of territory under British rule, and he volunteered to go with Sir Francis Scott’s expedition to Coomassie in 1895. The suggestion horrified the Queen, who felt that he supplied much of the youth and brightness

which now surrounded her, and she felt that she could not spare him. But he wanted at least to prove himself as a soldier, and Princess Beatrice saw with him how much more bearable successful action of the sort might make his life. No one realized that he had had no training, that he went from the soft life of a palace to the hardships of long marches in an unknown climate, and that his habits had unfitted him for anything of the kind. When the expedition landed he shared in the labours and fatigues of those with whom he marched, having nearly reached Coomassie when he was struck down by fever, and being promptly sent back to the coast, died on H.M.S. *Blond* on the way home on January 19, 1896.

If he had been personally but a shadow to the people, his death made them realize the grief of his wife and the Queen, and sympathy was felt for them all through the country. Victoria responded with one of her public letters, expressed so simply that very pity strengthened the protecting love which her subjects had again begun to feel for her—

“ This new sorrow is overwhelming, and to me in a double sense, for I lose a dearly loved and helpful son, whose presence was like a bright sunbeam in my home; and my dear daughter loses a noble, devoted husband, to whom she was united by the closest affection. To witness the blighted happiness of the daughter who has never left me and has comforted and helped me is hard to bear.”

Four years earlier the Queen had suffered severest grief at the death of the heir presumptive, the Prince

of Wales's eldest son, Albert Victor, the Duke of Clarence. In December 1891 he had become engaged to his cousin, Princess May, the daughter of Princess Mary of Teck, and had almost immediately caught a cold which resulted in influenza and pneumonia. There had been rumours afloat as to how he had been living not wisely, but too well, and few were surprised that his strength would not stand against severe illness.

It was commonly said that the affections of Princess May, now our Queen, had from the first been given to Albert Victor's brother George, but that grandmamma had decreed that she must marry the heir to the throne, and what grandmamma decreed in matters of the heart was bound to become fact. True or not, Princess May was engaged to Prince George within a year, but this was not immediately made public; for, though the Queen approved, she would not allow any announcement to be made before the tomb was erected over the Duke of Clarence's grave!—an idea of etiquette which must raise a smile. Her Majesty was said to favour Prince George over his brother, and had had his portrait painted by Von Angeli, which raised the inevitable question, “Are there no English portrait painters?”

The marriage of the Duke of York and Princess May took place in July 1893, in the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace, the first royal wedding held in London for over fifty years; and the Queen was present, not as a tearful mourner as when her eldest son was married, but as the head of the house and the sympathetic grandmother.

There were other marriages in the family which pleased her. The Grand Duke of Hesse had died in 1889, and his son and successor married a cousin, the daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh and Saxe-Coburg. To this wedding of her two grandchildren went the Queen, her last visit to Coburg, that she might give the young people her blessing, which unfortunately did not avail them much, for they soon disagreed and were divorced eight years later.

Princess Alex of Hesse, said to be lovely, married the new Tsar Nicholas II in November of the same year, a marriage which gave Victoria exquisite pleasure; for though she could never lose her suspicions of Russian policy in the East, she loved to be allied with that great power by personal ties. In honour of the wedding she gave a state banquet at Windsor, and made the Tsar colonel-in-chief of the Second Dragoons, the Royal Scots Greys.

King Death was busy both with her friends and foes during these ten years, causing her varying degrees of grief or regret. For the death of her brother-in-law, Duke Ernst of Coburg, in 1893, she probably wept little, for the quarrel over the Greek succession had never been really healed, and Ernst was not morally all she could wish. They had not met for years, and his loss brought her the pleasant consequence that her second son inherited the country of his father.

For the death of Gladstone she also could have felt no emotion, even though she had met him once again and had, her feelings softened by time, shown him an unwonted kindness. It was at Cimiez, early in 1897,

where the Gladstones were staying. Princess Louise was also on a visit there, and invited the old people to tea. They were shown into a room, to quote Gladstone's words, "tolerably but not brilliantly lighted, much of which was populated by a copious supply of Hanoverian royalty. The Queen was in the inner part of the room, and behind her stood the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge . . . The Queen's manner did not show the old and usual vitality. It was still, but at the same time decidedly kind, such as I had not seen it for a good while before my final resignation. She gave me her hand, a thing which is, I apprehend, rather rare with men, and which had never happened with me during all my life, though that life, be it remembered, had included some periods of rather decided favour. Catherine sat down near her, and I at a little distance. My wife spoke freely and a good deal to the Queen, but the answers appeared to me rather slight . . . it seemed to me that the Queen's particular faculty and habit of conversation had disappeared. It was a faculty, not so much the free offspring of a rich and powerful mind, as the fruit of assiduous care, with long practice and much opportunity. After ten minutes it was signified to us that we had to be presented to all the other royalties."

Gladstone died in May 1898, and Victoria sent a note of sympathy to Mrs. Gladstone in which she was very careful to express no personal regret at the event, and no recognition of the services he had done her country. The nearest approach was, "My thoughts are much with you to-day, when your dear husband is

laid to rest," and "I shall ever gratefully remember his devotion and zeal in all that concerned my personal welfare and that of my family."

Among the pall-bearers were the Prince of Wales and Prince George, and when the funeral service in Westminster Abbey was over the former did one of those graceful acts which made him beloved by all parties and all classes. Instead of at once leaving the Abbey he walked gravely to where Mrs. Gladstone was seated, took her hand in his and kissed it. A very uncourtier-like Radical who saw the scene exclaimed: "This atones for a good deal. I'll never say another word against him as long as I live."

Such things as these help to explain the universal popularity of the Prince of Wales; they also explain the great difference in the quality of the national feeling which was stirred by the deaths of Queen Victoria and King Edward. The Hon. Adelaide Drummond<sup>1</sup> well expressed it in a letter to Lady Agatha Russell, when she said, "I think this loss" (of King Edward) "is felt much more as a personal one than that of Queen Victoria. That death was very impressive, but the tender feeling was not uppermost as it is with us now, and the fact seems to pervade all the everyday doings which used to suggest all sorts of prosperity and festivity."

Princess Mary of Teck, that vivacious and warm-hearted woman, died in October 1897. She had made herself peculiarly loved by the people, who were well

<sup>1</sup> *The Hon. Adelaide Drummond : Retrospect and Memoir.*  
By Basil Champneys.

aware of her good deeds and her reputation as an appreciator of humour, whether merely good humour or that form which approximates to wit. Every one is drawn to one who can laugh or cause laughter in others, and her ready laugh and gift of happy repartee added just that touch of pride in her which made us feel a personal touch of kinship. One of the stories so often told may bear repetition. Seated at dinner one evening between Canon Teignmouth Shore and another canon, the former asked if she did not feel in an alarming position with—

“Canon to right of her,  
Canon to left of her,” etc.

“Well,” she replied, “this is the very first time I have been classed with the Light Brigade.”

Her husband died in 1900, just a year before Victoria, being buried beneath St. George's Chapel. And that year the Queen's second son, Alfred Duke of Saxe-Coburg, suddenly developed a fatal illness, and left the little country he had so lately acquired to the boy Duke of Albany. Almost at the same time Victoria first learned that the Empress Frederick, of whom some one said in 1893 that she looked so remarkably young and well that she might have been thought to be about thirty, was stricken with the mortal disease which had killed the Emperor. This was a bitter grief, but her daughter outlived her for six months.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE APOTHEOSIS OF QUEEN VICTORIA

“Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring  
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling :

The Bird of Time has but a little way  
To flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing.”

*Edward FitzGerald's ‘Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.’*

“From many lands we come ;  
From North, from South, from East, from West, we bring  
Our fealty unforced. . . .”—*Geoffrey Junior.*

ALMOST every year Queen Victoria went abroad, generally to the south of France, though Italy was the chosen country on three occasions, and in 1889 she paid a visit to San Sebastian in Spain. Mentone had been a favourite with her, which was not far from San Remo, where Edward Lear, who had once taught her drawing, had a villa. He was much troubled by rumours that her Majesty intended to pay him a visit.

“T'other day,” he wrote in his well-known facetious style, “over a hundred owly fools came up and stood all about my gate for more than an hour ! but on finding that no Queen came went away gnashing their hair and tearing their teeth. I hope if her Majesty does come I shall be told of the future event before it does come to pass, as it would not be pretty to be caught in old slippers and shirt sleeves. I dislike contact with royalty, as you know; being a dirty landscape

painter, apt only to speak his thoughts and not to conceal them. The other day when some one said, ‘ Why do you keep your garden locked?’ said I, ‘ To keep out beastly German bands and odious wandering Germans in general.’ Says my friend, ‘ If the Queen comes to your gallery you had better not say that sort of thing.’ Says I, ‘ I won’t, if I can help it.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

Lord Spencer, who was with the Queen at Mentone, called to see him, and Lear commented with glee upon the outrageously ridiculous reports which were spread about the Queen’s going to see his pictures. “ Among the most absurd was one that old George had been busy for two days and two nights making immense quantities of macarōōn cakes; for, said the Sanramesi, ‘ It is known that the Queen of England eats macarōōn cakes continually, and also insists on her suite doing the same. And there is no one at San Remo who can make macarōōn cakes except Signor Giorgio Cocali (Lear’s cook). I told George of this, who laughed, a rare act on his part; and said, ‘ To begin with, I don’t even know what a macarōōn cake is like, and never saw one, to my knowledge.’ ”<sup>2</sup>

At the various places which the Queen visited a mass of legends arose about the things she did, which might or might not have been true. Her Indian and Scotch attendants, with their remarkable clothes, caused crowds to gather, especially in such large cities as Florence; and children found a never wearying

<sup>1</sup> Lear was keenly annoyed at a new hotel built by Germans, which overlooked and spoilt his garden.

<sup>2</sup> *Later Letters of Edward Lear.* Edited by Lady Strachey.

pleasure in stealing round to watch them. Once her Majesty told an Indian to give a cake to one little creature, but at his awesome approach the whole group of babes fled in screaming terror, drawing hearty laughter from the Queen.

It was her custom to drive about the grounds of the house in which she was staying in a donkey-chair in the morning and take a long drive in her landau in the afternoon. When at Nice in 1897 she often passed on the hill road an old beggar, sitting in a rough little wooden cart, drawn by two dogs, to whom she generally gave a coin. One morning the old man whipped up his dogs and proceeded to race the Queen's carriage down the hill. For a while his dogs kept bravely abreast, but of course soon had to give up the contest, and her Majesty was sufficiently diverted to send some one back to him with a second douceur.

At times her hotel surroundings were scarcely majestic, though the hotel proprietor may have been very proud of them, and Lord Ronald Gower, in his *Old Diaries*, gives us a glimpse of her in homely surroundings at Aix-Les-Bains. Commanded to dine with her, he found the dining-room so small that the ten people at the table quite filled it up; on its walls was only one picture—a Jubilee portrait of her Majesty. Could that have been intended as a compliment, and if so, how dull a one! The reception-room, in which local magnates were to make their bows before royalty, was lit only by a few candles, and the dinner guests made desperate but futile efforts to induce the gas chandelier to add to the illumination, until the

Queen, fearing an accident, begged them to desist. That the reception might be in good style the middle of the room had been cleared of furniture, and seemingly the sides too, for when more candles and a lamp had been secured there was no place upon which they could be stood. To add a touch of colour, some one seized some vases of flowers—artificial, there being none others at hand—and brought them in, and was met by the same trouble, being at last obliged to group them on the one vacant spot which had been found for the lamp. It all sounds very curious when one remembers the particularity of the Queen at home, the way in which she liked people to appear as if by magic at the moment at which she expressed a wish for them, and her absolute intolerance of any hitch whatever in the service around her. But perhaps on this particular evening all her attendants had a holiday.

At Nice, in 1897, the conditions were much the same while she was staying at "the hideous Hotel Regina," the drawing-room walls of which were covered with red paper and hung with bad paintings lent by a picture dealer; while the dining-room was disfigured by a vulgar glaring paper and a life-sized copy of the coronation picture of George III and Queen Charlotte.

A matter which much exercised the minds of the inhabitants of these towns was the way in which the Queen of England dressed, for, like most of her country-people of that day, she thought that any old clothes were good enough for travelling, and she did not compliment the Florentines or Nicians by any

effort after regality. A broad-brimmed straw hat, a shawl and a black skirt which had seen much service, such as she wore in the grounds of Osborne or Windsor, are said to have become familiar in the towns of her holiday making, and were the subject of many jokes among our southern friends as well as in England. A writer of a magazine article tells how once a new stableman at Windsor saw a little old woman examining the horses one day, and called out—

“Hello! no one is allowed in here when the Queen is about!” upon which the straw hat, pointed shawl and black skirt turned round sharply, and the man’s jaw dropped as he recognized the visitor.

Victoria’s 1893 visit to Florence found, for some reason, a large number of commentators, who give many little interesting pictures of her doings. It has not generally been known that the precautions taken on these foreign journeys were in some ways more elaborate than even those across England, and it is a little wonderful that the French should have allowed their through service to be disarranged on her account. But the Queen, like all sovereigns, feared assassination and accident, and it is quite certain that the authorities in France would have done anything rather than have suffered any ill thing to happen to her in their country. Thus, when she went on this journey to Florence, all the way there from Cherbourg the lines were cleared, so that for two hours no other train or portion of a train ran in front of hers.

On several occasions King Humbert and his Queen had visited her when she was abroad, and this year it

was rumoured that she intended to return their calls, but the visit was opposed by the Vatican. It was said, too, that feeling in England was against it, so far as the intention was known, for Rome—terrible fact!—was the home of Roman Catholicism! There is no bigotry in the world like that of the English Evangelican when thinking of Romanism. The peasants of Cimiez firmly believed, though, that in her heart Victoria was a Roman Catholic, and had to go abroad to be shriven in secret.

She was particularly keen to see the miraculous picture of the Annunciation, which was always carefully hidden under a curtain behind the altar of the Church of the Annunciation in Florence, and the privilege of seeing which was rarely granted. The difficulties in her way added zest to the visit when the permission came, and she was wheeled into the church in her chair by her Indian attendants. They were all grouped before the picture, candles were lit, prayers were said and much genuflexion made, and at last the great moment came when most solemnly the curtain was withdrawn from what the priests said was a picture drawn by heavenly hands. The Queen looked and looked, then turned to Ronald Gower, whispering—

“Can you see anything, Ronald? for I cannot.”

He replied that he could only see a glitter of jewels, for all that was visible was a blurred female profile beneath a crown of incrusted gems. The Queen must have felt some inward amusement when the young monk near her said with bated breath, that “Michael Angelo had remarked that he thought he knew some-

thing of painting, and he was convinced that no mortal hand could have painted the work!"

Old age crept gently upon Victoria. By 1890 she never walked without a stick, and it was evident that movement was uncomfortable; two or three years later she would enter a room leaning heavily upon the arm of an Indian and using the stick with her other hand; then she was wheeled about the castle in a chair. By 1898 her sight was failing, for cataract had appeared, and she could not easily read her letters, though this was kept as secret as possible, and dispatch boxes were sent her as usual. She kept up as long as she could her open-air life, and one reads of her in 1893 sitting in the garden several hours on a March day going through business papers, she being then nearly seventy-five years old. Almost up to the end, too, she would go, when at Windsor, from the castle to White Lodge, a tea-house at Frogmore, before breakfast, and, after having a cup of coffee, attend the service there and then return. It was at this place she would occupy a summer-house and work on dispatches, with her secretaries around her.

Age seemed to bring her youthful tastes back, and there was no longer any need to beg her to go to a theatre, for she was quite ready to command the theatre to go to her. Beginning in 1890, when her children organized some private theatricals and tableaux at Osborne, her liking for the drama revived. So she saw *The Gondoliers*, Duse in *La Locandiera*, and commanded Tree to act *The Red Lamp* at Balmoral. She also turned to her early favourites, and had *Il*

*Trovatore*, *Faust*, *Carmen* and *Cavalleria Rusticana* to be performed before her. She entered with great zest into the fun of Tom Taylor's *Helping Hands* at Osborne, and eighteen months before her death had Sanger's Circus at Windsor Castle, with 150 horses, elephants, camels and many wild birds and beasts. To this was added an historical procession, some of the characters being taken by well-known people, and representing St. George, Richard III and even Queen Elizabeth. That many of these shows were for the sake of Princess Beatrice's children did not detract from the fact that she too enjoyed them.

She no longer avoided garden parties or state concerts, and when Princess Maude married Prince Charles of Norway in the private chapel of Buckingham Palace in 1896 she was there, and gave a garden party in the palace gardens, and also was present at a state concert to which 1500 guests were invited, the royalties sitting in crimson and gold seats, strictly in order of precedence, which, being so at all functions, must have been rather boring, as the neighbours were always the same. Princess Maude received £4000 a year from the sum allotted to the Prince of Wales for his children, and the Queen must have been relieved that there was no longer any need for her to enter into a new struggle on that point.

In 1896 her Majesty entertained the Tsar of Russia with the Tsarina and their infant at Balmoral, insisting that it was a purely family visit, a statement which her ministers duly echoed, though every one knew that negotiations were going on between the two

sovereigns concerning the disturbed state of Europe and the system of murder and illimitable taxation of the Armenians by the Turks. The previous year Rosebery had addressed the House on the horrors which had been perpetrated there, "while the Powers look on and fly little diplomatic kites." The matter threatened European war, and a little later culminated in the crisis of Crete. It was rumoured that the Tsar wished to associate with England in delivering the Armenians from the ghastly thraldom in which they lived, a rumour which had little association with fact, for the Tsar refused to use coercion with Turkey, nor would France join in, and England felt that it could not act alone. Twenty-five thousand Armenians were massacred in 1896, and the diplomatic kites continued to fly for years! But the notable point was that, with a Conservative leader in the House, for in 1895 Salisbury took Rosebery's place, the Queen was willing to reverse the whole of her Eastern policy, and go to the aid of the oppressed. It was, however, only partly the result of the different political influence with which she was surrounded—there was also another and more personal reason. Age had, as has been several times pointed out, brought a change in her attitude; she had at last, and perhaps unconsciously, discarded the pernicious attempt to rule her country according to the remembered wishes of Prince Albert, then dead for thirty-five years; she was at last governing according to the advice of her ministers and according to the natural, humane sentiments of her own mind; she was at last herself and not the shadow of some one else.

By 1897 the Queen had completed sixty years of reign, and the well-named "Diamond" Jubilee took place. By a route three times as long as that of the Jubilee of ten years before, she drove in her chariot of state to St. Paul's Cathedral, preceded and followed by Prime Ministers from all the colonies, delegates from India and all the dependencies and representatives from all the armed forces of the empire. Here were Mounted Rifles from Victoria and New South Wales, from the Cape and Natal, from "Our Lady of the Snows." Here were Hausas from the Niger and the Gold Coast, coloured men from the West India regiments, Zaptiehs from Cyprus, Chinamen from Hong-Kong and Dyaks from British North Borneo; here were Englishmen, Scotchmen, Irishmen and Welshmen, Imperial Service troops sent by the native princes of India, and a detachment of Sikhs. Said a writer in *Figaro*, "Rome is equalled if not surpassed by the Power which, in Canada, Australia, India and the China seas, in Egypt, Central and Southern Africa, in the Atlantic and in the Mediterranean, rules peoples and governs in their interests."

In the midst of this great and gorgeous procession, in a golden coach drawn by eight cream-coloured horses, who marched proudly under their load of golden harness, champing their gilded bits, their blue reins held by grooms whose scarlet coats were encrusted with gold and insignia of service, in this magnificence came a little old woman of seventy-nine, clothed in garments which gave the appearance of rich white lace figured with black, her face beaming, and

bowing her acknowledgments from right to left for four hours.

But was she merely a little old woman? No, she was an idol, a symbol, the symbol of Imperialism surrounded by the proofs of her great cult. Imperialism was burning like a flame in the hearts of the English, but never before had they seen with their own eyes just what it meant. The knowledge burst upon them like a miracle; they saw, they understood, and their rending shouts meant the bending of the knee to the power which was centred in that little frail figure. Through roaring crowds she passed, the awakener of the nation's self-consciousness. They shouted in acclaim of their own importance as well as of hers, but she did not realize the cause of their emotion, the great niche in which they had placed her. She felt it to be personal.

"How kind they are, how kind they are to me!" she said through blinding tears, as she re-entered the gates of Buckingham Palace.

And if they had been challenged, every one in the crowd would have declared stoutly that their homage was personal, as it was, to a large extent, yet without this new awakening it would not have been the same homage. At last the bond between the Queen and her English subjects was complete, riveted by Imperialism.

It was the apotheosis of Queen Victoria!

Old as she was, the day brought her nothing but happiness, and later she mused and dreamed over it and constantly returned to it in conversation. Meet-

ing the Bishop of Winchester the following month, she asked him from what point he had seen the procession, and then suddenly remembering, added, with a laugh—

“Oh, you were on the steps of St. Paul’s. I was unfortunate—I had a very bad place and saw nothing.”

Six days after the great procession her Majesty gave a garden party at Buckingham Palace, driving slowly with the Prince and Princess of Wales in an open carriage through lanes of her guests, “looking most amiable and happy.” But the great review off Spithead, by which the Navy took part in the Diamond Jubilee, she could not attend.

There were some, however, who, in this period of rejoicing, felt aggrieved. The Queen was to receive the congratulations of the Commons, and with her martinet-like precision, which allowed nothing for numbers, appeared on the very moment, remained in the room but a few minutes and went away. It has several times been pointed out that the carriage arrangements at any royal reception were atrocious, and though there were many carriages, the number was not excessive. However, the usual muddle occurred, and by the time most of the visitors were allowed to crawl to the palace door, the Queen had long gone to seek her afternoon repose. As a certain General G. C. Bartley wrote to *The Times*, somewhat derisively, over the supposed privileges given to members as regarded the Court and the Jubilee, he read of Colonists and foreigners of all nations going to royal reviews, parties, garden and otherwise, but as a member

of Parliament he had not received a single invitation of any sort to identify himself with the festivities or meetings; "but then I was not made in Germany nor in New South Wales," he added. "I attribute all deficiencies to State officials who manage these affairs, but large constituencies are apt to resent such treatment of their representatives and even to consider it an intentional slight."

But this was a new Victoria, and instead of passing the complaint by with indifference, she at once had an invitation to a garden party issued to the members and their wives.

With the imperial fervour which had been steadily growing since the death of Beaconsfield, there was a growing sense that England had certain scores to wipe off. Afghanistan had been settled as far as possible by Gladstone after the second war, but it was felt necessary to come to some definite agreement with Russia about boundaries, a matter which was fortunately brought to a conclusion with nothing more serious than a war of words.

Through European machinations the Sudan still remained in unrest. So far the policy initiated by the G. O. M. had been maintained by his successors, but it was felt by 1897 that the time had arrived for making a great effort to settle the country. So British and Egyptian troops were sent out under Lord Kitchener, and the battle of Omdurman, in September 1898, restored to Egypt the greater part of the territory it had once possessed, which caused the Queen intense satisfaction. It was, however, not placed in the same

way again in the power of the Turk, and England has had since to maintain a great army there, both military and civil; in fact, England has practically added Egypt and the Sudan to her list of dependencies.

From 1897 to 1899 one frontier war succeeded another in India, brought about by fear, defiance and patriotism on the part of the tribesmen and by a mixture of self-defence and aggression on our side. So we went on expanding with a firm conviction that we were conferring a blessing on the world by so doing, and that if they would only realize it the black men, the yellow and the brown would be much happier in subjection than left to their own freedom. It was the heyday of the missionary who saw evil in every religion but his own, and went about preaching of that evil and of the religious blessings which would accrue to the coloured men under British rule; incidentally he was also the pioneer after whom all the sins of civilization were introduced into every quarter of the globe. However, it all jumped with Imperialism, and we were content to stigmatize these little people who were fighting for the continued possession of their independence as wicked rebels, horrible barbarians and treacherous enemies.

As to Africa, Majuba Hill still rankled and, though the pacifists kept clear of war there as long as possible, there was ample occasion for it on both sides. The position of the Boers has been explained earlier. The Uitlanders said, on their side, "We are the majority of the inhabitants here, we make the wealth of the country, you tax us beyond all necessity, you will not

let us educate our children, you keep us under the heel of your police; above all, you give us no political rights." "Let us live in peace in our country," said the Boers. "I insist upon dragging wealth out of the bowels of your earth," replied the Uitlander. How could such divergent interests be reconciled? Of course, there had to be war.

A great outcry was raised in 1899 against the starting of this war, for even by then the Jingo fever was beginning to abate, but there were sinister circumstances underlying it, known only to some of those in authority and some of those on the spot. The Kaiser had never visited England since his famous telegram to Kruger, and the Kaiser was still hoping to make himself master, by hook or by crook, of a broad band across Africa, from east to west, which should effectually and for ever divide the British possessions in the north from those in the south. His dream was Africa for Germany, for having once secured this band he would continue, he hoped, to broaden it until the continent was all his.

In March 1899 the Uitlanders sent direct to Queen Victoria a petition, signed by 21,000 British out there, setting forth their heavy grievances, and by then the suspicion arose that Kruger was preparing for war. To the Cabinet the practical choice lay between the gradual submission of all South Africa to a Boer farmer of sordid habits and peculatory instincts or a fight to a finish. There could be no doubt as to what the choice should be.

The fight began in October, and the next month

Kaiser William, anxious to lay his hand on his heart and say "This is not my game!" came to visit the Queen and the Prince of Wales with his Kaiserin. This visit, of course, in the usual ostrich fashion of the Court, which wished to hide its activity under the sands of innocence, was announced to have no relation whatever to South African affairs, to be a purely family visit; and to support this the historians tell us that the notorious Kaiser-telegram to Kruger was really quite innocent and free from inimical intent. But how are we to believe the smooth speakers?

From the commencement of her widowhood the Queen's interest in her army had been yearly increasing, and when war began it was never out of her thoughts. But though she did what she could, it was impossible that she should again harry the War Office as she had done in the past. The conditions were different, the Government was now Conservative and not Liberal, and so could do with impunity what the other would have been forbidden to think; her energies were lessening, and her sight was so affected that she could no longer read the reports and dispatches which were sent for. So she knitted woollen comforters and caps, feeling great vexation when her work was appropriated by officers instead of being given to the men. At Christmas she broke through long habit, and remained for the third time at Windsor rather than go to Osborne, that she might be nearer the centre of news, and she sent chocolate to the soldiers at the front at New Year.

But now that she was near her life's end there

remained one section of her countryfolk whom she had never forgiven, against whom she had harboured distrust all her reign, adding suspicion, resentment and a desire for reprisals since 1862. Those people lived in Ireland. She had never pardoned Dublin's refusal to put up a statue to the Prince Consort, the attacks on her sons or the national desire for freedom in the administration of the country's affairs. In 1899 she held out the olive branch to Bristol, after ignoring the place for nearly sixty years; would she die and still leave Ireland to ban her memory?

She might have done this had it not been for the Boer War. The Irish have ever been fighters, and England has ever taken advantage in her need of this great quality. In 1900 the bravery of the Irish troops made a great impression upon her, and it is to be hoped that in the general mellowing which age had brought to her rigid self-complacency she felt some regret, perhaps even remorse, for the way in which she had treated the whole nation. She had persistently, sometimes heatedly, refused all the suggestions of her ministers to go there or, as was repeatedly urged in earlier years, to choose a residence there; she would allow no son of hers to be associated with the island; and the only royal link between England and Ireland for thirty years had been made by the Prince of Wales, who had three times visited it, being accredited by the fearful with great courage when he went there in 1885. Yet his courage was not put to the test, for he met kindness and loyalty everywhere. "What do you want?" he asked of a man with a bundle of walking-

sticks, who tried to get near him and who was being chased away by his attendants.

"Nothing, your honour, nothing, but to ask your honour to take a present of a Tipperary rifle," replied the man, offering the best stick he had. The Prince took it with genial thanks, sending some one after him with a sovereign. When some ill-looking people in Dublin were cried out against by the suite, who wanted them sent away, the Princess turned to the latter, saying, "Oh, think of how they have been treated."

When the Queen went to Wales in 1889, the Irish made one more attempt to induce her to visit them, and again she refused. To her Ireland was nothing. She needed the visible proof of personal service on their part, for she had no imagination, before the hardness of her heart could be broken; and this proof was given now. It moved her to a feeling of gratitude, and she sent permission to her Irish soldiers to wear their national badge, the shamrock, one day in the year, the day of St. Patrick; and then in April 1900 she gave up her long journey to the south of France for the short one to Dublin. She did it gracefully, telling the people of Dublin that she came to seek change and rest and to revive her memory of the warm-hearted welcome given to her, her husband and children in earlier days. And so hearty was the welcome that she declared that the Irish really loved her, and she responded to the wit and gaiety of the crowd by repeating—

"How I delight in the Irish!"

For three weeks she remained there, driving about,

attending a military review, an assembly of 50,000 school children, and entertaining notabilities. If only she had done this from time to time during the forty years of neglect, how different might Irish Victorian history have been.

This year, old and feeble as she was, all her youthful enthusiasm had revived. She drove through London in March, that she might show her deep interest in her people at a time of anxiety, and was received with the greatest enthusiasm, love and veneration, she looking well and happy. She visited Netley and Woolwich hospitals; she held a Drawing-room at Buckingham Palace, her last; she acted personally as sponsor to the Duke of York's third child, she gave musical entertainments at Windsor, a garden party at Buckingham Palace, and a state banquet to the Khedive of Egypt. She received at Windsor the delegates from Australia, who were watching their Commonwealth Bill through the Commons, welcomed home troops from the war, among them Canadian and Colonial detachments, and attended—her last appearance in public—a sale of needlework by Irish ladies at Windsor Town Hall. It is not too much to say that this year she did as much as she had done all together in the first ten years of her widowhood.

Even the beloved Scotland was allowed to suffer somewhat from her war anxiety, for Victoria's thoughts were fixed on South Africa, and she would allow no servants' balls, no fêtes, no joy-ringing of any sort. Truly a revolution had taken place!

In her demeanour the old jealousy of her apparent

dignity, showing itself in the fear of any liberty being offered her—a most curious characteristic in one so highly placed as herself—had entirely disappeared. Perhaps by that time she knew that dignity could cast out fear. I have been told by a dweller near the castle that once, during these late years, he saw a happy wedding party, meeting the Queen in her carriage, throw confetti over her, and she responding with a jolly laugh of amusement and restraining her attendants from driving the party away. How one regrets that spurious dignity which kept her so aloof so long! It leads to the thought that it was grafted upon her nature by the German training given her in what royalty should expect.

The article in *The Quarterly Review* shows how, before she was so old, at the shadow or less than the shadow of freedom she would freeze and probably not thaw again through a dinner-party, saying the next morning—

“I chose to have a headache last night. I am not quite sure that —— is discreet.”

In ordinary family life a headache under such circumstances would be regarded as a euphemistic way of explaining sulkiness. With the Queen I suppose it was regarded as a calculated method of ensuring a rigid line of behaviour among her guests, a heavy penalty for those guests to pay for dining with royalty!

On December 14, 1900, Queen Victoria celebrated for the last and thirty-ninth time the mourning rites at the mausoleum at Frogmore, and four days later took an unconscious farewell of Windsor towers, when

she started for Osborne. She had largely lost her memory, she did not always hear, and it annoyed her to miss a word in conversation, and she was further depressed by her anxieties concerning the war. At Osborne one more trouble fell upon her, for on Christmas Day her valued friend and attendant, Lady Jane Churchill, was found dead in bed. The tearful Queen wove a wreath of flowers with her trembling old hands to lay on the bier.

Yet on the second of January she received Lord Roberts, and talked a little with him, but it was a supreme effort; when Joseph Chamberlain went to her on the 10th she could scarcely speak, and the interview lasted only two or three minutes. On the 15th she drove out for the last time, her companion being the Dowager Duchess of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, and after the 19th she did not speak again. Two days later the Kaiser arrived at Osborne, and the next day she died, with him and five of her children round her.

Of the funeral there is little need to write. It was military, according to her desires, and the *Alberta* carried her over the Solent between lines of thundering battleships. From Victoria to Paddington soldiers guarded the roads two deep and shoulder to shoulder, and artillery escorted the gun-carriage upon which her body lay. The King, the German Emperor, the Duke of Connaught, the kings of Greece and Portugal, and representatives from all the royal families of Europe followed, to see her placed in the spot where her husband had lain for nearly forty years.

It was the end of a woman of great sincerity. If

she made many mistakes, alienating in turn different sections of her people, two things must be remembered. One is that in her age for a short space she brought them all under her influence; and another that she was born in 1818, and had helped to drag England out of the disgusting quagmire of immorality in which the people were sunk from the time of the Stuarts till the end of the Georges. She was the link between then and now, and a link cannot be the crown and completion of a chain. She did a great deal more for the reconstruction of English habits than could ever have been expected from a member of the Guelph family. Her chief weakness lay in the rigidity of her will. And yet this—because of the length of her life—became at last the chief cause of the claim made by her adulators that she was great. By this rigidity she brought disasters upon herself, and yet at last, by its continued exercise, she hypnotized the people into believing that she must be right. Without putting it into words, the majority agreed that she ruled by Right Divine.

She was also, under Beaconsfield, one of the chief influences in enlarging her empire. Had she had unrestricted liberty in this matter she would inevitably have brought disaster upon her country, for in this, as well as in domestic policy, we may go too fast. The sane road is the middle road, and the glory and safety of England depended more upon her changing ministers than upon her.



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